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THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRAYER-MEETING

AND ITS IMPROVEMENT.

BY CAL. OGBURN.



WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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Prefessor of Mental and Moral Philosophy, Cotner University.

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.—1 TIM. 4:12.

> ST. LOUIS: CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING COMPANY, 1894.

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WASHINGTON

Dedication.

TO MY MOTHER IN HEAVEN,

Who always had, and, I am confident, still has, deep interest in my welfare, and to whom, more than to any other earthly being, I am indebted for whatever of goodness and usefulness I possess; and with the prayerful hope that it may strengthen every good impulse in the minds of its readers, help them to worship God more acceptably, and enable them to be more useful to "Christ and the Church," this little volume is, with filial and tender regard, inscribed by



PREFACE.

If "books are born, not made," I can truly say that this little volume is no exception to the rule. It is not the mechanical combination of words and sentences, but the offspring of Experience and Observation.

In its pages I have endeavored to state clearly and to explain fully, as far as I have gone, how to make the young people's prayer-meetings more interesting and profitable.

It may at first appear to some that I have entered too much into detail, but I think it will be conceded at once by all for whom I have written—the young people in Christ of all religious dedominations—that nothing has been explained too fully.

I am quite sure that we, whose duty it is to ininstruct the people, give them credit for knowledge they do not possess; and this I say without thought of casting any reflection whatever on them for their lack of understanding. The re-

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flection, if any, is rather upon those whose duty it is to impart instruction. We seem to forget that it has taken "precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, and there a little," to give to us the comparatively small amount of information we possess; so we only offer "hints and suggestions," to those whom we should instruct, which are often as meaningless to them as the hieroglyphics on an Egyptian obelisk.

Let it be borne in mind, then, that I have not written for the young people of the past, but for those of the present and future—not for the experienced, but for the inexperienced, and let the value of the book be determined accordingly.

And now, little book, may God bless you on your mission of usefulness to the young men and young women, and to the boys and the girls, who have pledged, or shall pledge, themselves to be loyal to "Christ and the Church."

CAL. OGBURN.

Riverside, Cal., Feb. 3, 1894.

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INTRODUCTION.

The work of the young people has become so important that it cannot be passed in silence. The time was when grave and thoughtful men stood in doubt of it. Not wishing to stand in the way of any force to be operated in favor of the cause of Christ, and fearing, on the other hand, that the inexperience and want of discipline on the part of the leaders would cause it to fail of its purpose, and so leave the cause its adherents loved weaker than it found it, they said nothing. Their plan was, "Let be, and see if Elias will come and help him;" "Let it alone, for if it is from men it will come to nought, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it."

But the time of waiting is over. We know now that it is a power for good. Nor do we endorse it because of its rapid growth and great numbers, but because its aims are right, its workers are willing and active, and its plans are wise.

1. The commission, "Let him who hears say, (11)

Come, '' calls on all who know the Lord to participate in the work of turning the world to God. It is not a question of age nor sex, but of knowing the Lord, and ability and desire to work in his cause.

- 2. What individuals and classes of disciples can do to the best advantage in the service of their Master can, many times, be learned by trial. The ability of the Endeavor workers, for instance, has now been sufficiently tested. No reasonable doubt now remains as to this being a legitimate field, and one of the best which, at this time, they can occupy.
- 3. These earnest workers are nearer the young people who are out of Christ than the pastor or the older members of the church. Hence they can reach them easier and do them more good than any others.
- 4. They are more active in the work than are the older members. Their hope is stronger and their blood is warmer. They will go when and where the older ones will not and can not go. And the pastor who does not have the assistance of a young people's society is unfortunate, to say the least. The only pure church is the one that is active in the service of the Lord. Where

all are workers there will be no grumblers, and no cases of discipline.

- 5. The effects of this movement are the diffusion of Biblical knowledge, the adoption of practical methods for the evangelization of the world, and the unity of all the people of God. As they have no creed but Christ, they cease to feel the influence of sectarianism. Maturing under these conditions, they will ever work and pray for the unity of the people of God.
- 6. I have long felt the need of a work which would set before these enthusiastic workers for Christ principles and orders which would assist them in their work. And I am delighted in the prospect before me. The book to which you are now introduced has been carefully written by Cal. Ogburn, of Riverside, California. I remember him as one of the best and most faithful of my students in Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa. I am charmed with the book itself: it is just the work which is needed at the present time; its characteristics are correctness, clearness, adequacy, force, brevity. May the blessing of God rest and remain upon the book, the author, and the many thousands who read it and follow its wise-hearted suggestions.

D. R. DUNGAN.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRAYER-MEETING



THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRAYER-MEETING AND ITS IMPROVEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

WHO SHOULD NOT ATTEND?

The prayer-meeting should have for its object the cultivation of the devotional spirit. If persons without this desire are in the majority, or if there are even enough of them present to make their presence felt, they will injure or ruin the meeting. They create an atmosphere that is decidedly malarious. The devotional sentiment is soon poisoned and dies.

It has often happened, and will doubtless happen again, that a meeting that has been planned for and prayed over by a devout few, and has been looked forward to with joy, has been made a miserable failure by those being present who were en-

tirely out of sympathy with the purpose of the meeting. Who, then, should come to a young people's prayer-meeting? This is a vexed question, and one that it is difficult to settle practically. No rule can be made that will always be effective. No two communities or congregations of young people are exactly alike. Sanctified common sense must be used in all cases in deciding this matter. It is safe to say, however, that persons should not come who are ill-behaved when present. It is a sad fact that there are those who think themselves young men and young women, and who would be greatly insulted if they should be charged with lacking the principal element of true manhood or womanhood—due respect for the house and people of God-who attend the meetings with more or less regularity and, as regularly as they come, misbehave in a shameful manner. Prayer-meetings have been laughed and whispered out of existence. Save the "giggling girls" and the "smart young fellows," who are usually with them, if you can, but do not sacrifice the prayer-meeting. Patience, even, sometimes ceases to be a virtue. If the meetings are losing in interest from time to time, silent forbearance with the disturbers must end.

Sometimes to have a pious middle-aged or elderly member of the church attend the meetings and sit near those who are in the habit of misbehaving will obviate the necessity for doing anything more to secure good order. Care should be taken, if this is done, to select some one in whom they have the utmost confidence as to his being a true Christian. Not to do this is to make a bad matter much worse.

If this does not effect a reformation, it is better to ask the pastor or one or more of the elders or deacons to talk to them privately about their lack of respect for the people who meet to worship God, than for the young people to take the case in hand. Unless you are quite certain there are young people in the society who have great influence over them, turn the whole matter over to the official board of the church, where it properly belongs.

Hobby-riders, whether old or young, should stay away. Theoretically it would be very appropriate to have a placard above the door bearing the words, "No admittance to religious cranks and hobbyriders," but practically it would be perfectly useless to do so, for they would be the last persons in the world to apply it to themselves. About the only way to deal effectually with them is to tell them privately and plainly, face to face, that the prayer-meeting is not the place for them to parade their pet chargers; that nobody cares who Cain's wife was, or what became of "the lost ten tribes of Israel." They may take offense and remain away altogether. If so, congratulate yourselves that "their room is better than their company." It is utterly impossible to reform a chronic religious crank—one who is forever dilating upon some wild theory. Do not waste time and patience in trying to bring about a reformation, for "Ephraim is joined to his idols: let him alone."

All who are habitually lugubrious should not come. Fortunately for themselves

and others this is a very limited class. But one or two can kill a prayer-meeting. His very appearance is sad and dolorous. You would think he had lost all his friends but for the absence of the antiquated crape hat-band, and you even feel like presenting him with a whole bolt of crape, thinking that probably in his extreme sorrow he had overlooked that sacred badge of mourning and index to a broken heart. The whole congregation cannot sing, "Joy to the World" or "Blessed Assurance" loud enough to drown his deep sighs. Occasionally he places his handkerchief to his face to absorb the solitary, and to him very welcome, tear that steals down his cheek. He knows that death or some impending disaster is near at hand. These are very degenerate days to him. looks only on the dark side of everything. If he calls for a hymn to be sung it is "Hark from the Tomb." His favorite passage of Scripture is Ps. 90:10. His favorite poem Burns' "Man was made to He cannot understand why anyone, and especially young people,

should be so light-hearted. He is an east wind to the prayer-meeting. Keep him away.

The hypercritical should not attend. There are a few persons in every community who seem to have been born in the "objective case." Nothing suits them. They are never happy, but the nearest approach to it is when they can find, or make, which it is not hard for them to do, an opportunity to unmercifully criticise some one. They are as often found at the prayer-meeting as anywhere, and invariably for the one purpose for which they live-to criticise. They are nothing if not critical. These self-appointed critics will tell you the singing was perfectly awful, the prayers dull and prosy, the remarks of the leader rambling and disjointed, though he, as often probably she, neither sang, or prayed, or uttered a single sentence. She seldom does. She does not attend for that purpose. You can tell that by the turn of her nose and the curl of her lip, which indicate anything but a devotional

spirit. She is not present at every meeting. Her refined ethical nature can not bear the strain. She is sure to be present, however, at all special meetings and upon all important occasions. Bless her dear life! how much occasion she gives for the cultivation of at least one Christian virtue—patience.

Super-sensitive people should absent themselves from the prayer-meeting. How uncomfortable they are, even in the house of God. They are always being slighted by some one or everyone. The more attention they receive the more they demand. They are more exacting than Shylock. They will not tolerate any recognition of others, for it is always at their expense. Poor, silly, sensitive, selfish soul! How I pity you! I know you are rather a rare specimen, and for that reason you would probably be more comfortable in a dime museum than at a young people's prayer-meeting. I advise you, therefore, to place yourself on exhibition in some third-rate "museum of wonders."

All who belong to any "Mutual Admi-

ration Society" should remain away. The motto of these societies is not "For Christ and the Church," but, "You compliment me, and I'll compliment you." If self-praise is half scandal, then the fulsome flattery of each other by the members of these societies is all scandal. It is a shameful, sinful thing to do. Avoid hypocrisy as you would the deadliest poison, as in fact it is. Never bestow an empty, meaningless compliment. Neither by hint or insinuation, or in any other manner, indicate your desire to receive such. Be too Christ-like to ever do anvthing to receive praise of men. Compliment the deserving in an honest, modest way, but do not flatter them. If at any time inclined to be anything but true and honest in the sight of God in this matter, read Matt. 25: 1-33.

CHAPTER II.

WHO SHALL ATTEND?

This question is quite as important as the one discussed in the preceding chapter. There should be no imitation of the old man's prayer for salvation-"Me and my wife, my son and his wife, we four and no more"-in answering this question. There should be nothing selfish or clannish connected with it. The prayer-meeting must not be for the benefit (?) of a select few. It should be entirely in the interest of all for whom a young people's prayer-meeting is by its very name intended. All should attend who will assist either directly or indirectly in making it more interesting and profitable, or who will be benefited by being present.

All who are mentioned in the preceding chapter should attend, but with the express understanding that they first

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reform. Why should anyone by his constant misbehavior disturb and annov others who are worshiping God? Why should the religious crank repeatedly canter about on his carefully-groomed steed to the utter disgust of those who must witness his monotonous performance? Why should the "graveyard Christian" be there to pour into unwelcome ears his doleful story? Why should the captious, caviling critic, like some hundred-eyed Argus, be present with his compound microscope to magnify the faults and shortcomings of others? Why should the "sensitive plant" come when she knows so well how the slightest touch will cause her such intense pain? And why should the members of the "Mutual Admiration Society" be at the meeting with their selfish pride and vanity? Certainly the folly and sinfulness of such conduct only need to be pointed out, seen and realized to lead to repentance and reformation.

[&]quot;Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us To see oursels as ithers see us,

It wad from mony a blunder free us, And silly notion.

The officers of the church should be present. Sometimes it is urged as an objection against the Y. P. S. C. E. that "it has a tendency to alienate the young people from the church." A very strange thing indeed when its motto is, "For Christ and the Church:" when a clause in the pledge, without which there can can be no true Christian Endeavor Society, binds the members to "support their own church in every way, especially by attending all her regular Sunday and mid-week services;" and when Article IX. of the model constitution, which has been adopted by most societies, declares that "this society being a part of the church, the pastor, deacons, elders or stewards, and Sunday-school superintendent shall be ex-officiis honorary members. Any difficult question may be laid before them for advice."

I think it is quite possible that this objection has been raised by persons who did not fully understand the principles

of the society, or it may have been occasioned by Endeavorers not being true to their pledge. In either case let the officers of the church attend the prayermeeting and render what assistance they can to make it more helpful to all. This their experience and good judgment will enable them to do in many ways. They can probably render the greatest assistance as the aged woman helped the young women who had banded themselves together in a missionary society. She was always present at their meetings, but remained silent. When asked why she attended so regularly, her reply was, "To smile on them." Let the officers be at the meeting, not to "run it," but to encourage the young people. Go and "smile on them." It will be like smiling at a mirror—they will smile back at you.

Old people, who are still young in spirit, might attend occasionally with pleasure and profit both to themselves and the young members. It might be better for them to take the advice sometimes given to children, "Be seen, not heard," especially for much speaking. Engage heartily in the singing and responsive reading, but do not take any further part, especially if there are enough young people present to fully occupy the time, unless invited to do so, and then be brief—please be very brief. Do not "feel slighted" if you are not invited to "say a word." The leader means no disrespect toward you. Remember the meeting is for young people. You are there to encourage and help them by your presence.

The pastor should be present at the meeting. This is to both pastor and society a matter of great importance. How can the pastor keep in touch with the young people of his congregation to guide and help them in their religious life if he is habitually absent from their prayer-meetings? If he cannot attend—which is hardly possible—he should give the reason for being absent. Fellow-pastor, do not allow your young people to believe that you have not interest enough in their welfare to attend their

meetings. If they have that opinion of you, your power over them for good is at an end.

Sometimes it is claimed that the presence of the pastor is embarrassing. If this claim is ever justly founded there must be something wrong in the relation between that pastor and his young people. This is an unnatural condition. Are the children embarrassed in their father's presence? No more should the young members of the church be in their pastor's presence.

The trouble when it exists may be on the side of the pastor principally, and that too without his being conscious of it. In taking part from time to time in the young people's prayer-meetings, he may display his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew in his exegesis of Scripture, may delve into the mysteries of the sciences, or explore the mazes of metaphysics, quite forgetful of the fact that he is addressing young people. They soon come to the conclusion that they are in the presence of one who is vastly their superior, and that to attempt to say anything will only display their lack of wisdom, and they very naturally feel embarrassed. The remedy is at hand and is easily applied. The preacher should come down from the throne where he has unintentionally placed himself, and be one of the young people.

On the other hand the principal cause of embarrassment may be a misunder-standing of the pastor by the young people. They do not confide in him as they should; do not realize that his chief object in being present at their meetings is to help and encourage them; that he would be the last person in the world to criticise or find fault with any attempt on their part, however blundering and awkward it might be, to take part in the meeting. A careful consideration of this matter will remove all occasion for embarrassment.

It is well for the pastor sometimes to lead the meeting, taking his turn as one the young people. He should be cordial in his manner, and his remarks should be simple and brief. He should endeavor to make every one present feel that it would be a pleasure to take part in the meeting, and he should try to make it easy for them to do so. He should leave many loose ends that can be easily taken hold of by others. Avoid conveying the impression in the beginning that "we are about to have an awfully solemn time."

All Christian young men and young women should come. Not only those who are members of the society, but all who are Christians. There is some danger of laying such stress on the society that young Christians who are not members of it will not feel that they are welcome at the prayer-meeting. In making the announcements of the meeting, from time to time, all Christian young people ought to receive a cordial invitation to attend. And when they come they should be made to feel "at home," and be invited to take part in the meeting.

All young people who are in sympathy

with the object of the meeting should be present. This will include not only the associate members, but many others who have not signed the pledge.

As far as it is possible, give each one present something appropriate to do to make the meeting more interesting. Everyone should have a hymn book whether he can sing or not. Bibles should be provided for all. Many will read quotations if handed to them with the request to do so. Strive to use every person in such a way that he will contribute to the profitableness of the meeting. This should be planned for by the leader and Prayer-meeting Committee when arranging the program or order of exercises for the meeting. This is an important matter, and ought to receive due attention at the proper time.

CHAPTER III.

SECURING ATTENDANCE.

Not the least factor in a successful prayer-meeting is a large attendance. Double the number of persons present and, other things being equal, you will more than double the interest and power of the meeting. A young man said, "I will be one of a dozen to take part, but I cannot be one of a few." To be sure it is very possible to have an interesting and profitable meeting when there are but few present, for it is the assurance of the Master that "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18:20.

The most essential thing of all is to meet in the name of Christ. Then the greater the number of such persons there are together the better for the interest of the meeting.

To secure a larger attendance, increase (34)

the number of active members in the society. These are pledged "to be present at, and to take part, aside from singing, in every Christian Endeavor prayer-meeting." If they are true to their pledge, as all real Endeavorers are, they can always be relied on.

Somebody asked an old soldier who was in charge of a gun commanding an important point at the Battle of Waterloo, what he could see while the battle was in progress. "See," said he, "nothing but smoke and dust." "What did you do?" "Stood by my gun."

That is what everyone does who has taken the Christian Endeavor pledge in good faith. He stands by the prayermeeting.

Wayland Hoyt has beautifully observed concerning the "typical prayer-meeting of the New Testament," an account of which is given in the second chapter of Acts, that "it was an attended prayer-meeting. 'They were all with one accord in one place.' Peter was not absent because it happened to be a little hot, and

James was not away because it happened to be a little cool, and Bartholomew was not away because it happened to be a little wet, and Matthew was not away because his toga was a little worn, and Mary was not absent because her veil had gotten to be a little out of style, and Salome and Andrew did not refuse to fill their places because just then there happened to be a party in Jerusalem, and James the Less was not away because he thought that Peter was taking a little too much to himself and was just a little officious. Not for any reasons like these or for any other reasons imaginable was any one away. It was an attended prayer-meeting. They were all with one accord in one place. Oh, the enthusiasm of numbers! Oh, the holy contagion of religious elbow touch! Oh, the power of presence! And this typical prayer-meeting had all these. It was an attended prayermeeting."

Increase the number of associate members. These "promise to attend the prayer-meetings of the society habitu-

ally," and by taking part in many appropriate ways, besides their presence being helpful and stimulating to others, they add very much to the interest of the meeting. Their presence should be an incentive to the active members to make the meetings as interesting as possible, with the end in view that they may be led thereby to take a decided stand for Christ. This should never be lost sight of by those who are already Christians.

Securing names of persons to propose for membership in the society should not be left entirely to the Lookout Committee. While this is a part of their special work, every member should give what assistance he may be able. The Lookout Committee should also have the help of all the members in securing the regular attendance of those who have signed the pledge. This means, if it were done, that the committee would have almost nothing to do in this respect, just as they ought not have, for every member would always be present unless detained by a lawful excuse, and in that event, unless it

were impossible to do so, an explanation for being absent would be sent to the meeting.

The members should see that looking up absentees is the smallest part of the work of the Lookout Committee. Why should any member by being unnecessarily absent from the meetings, lay any additional burden upon this committee? It is not courteous or right to do so.

Absent members should receive attention without delay. If some member of the Lookout Committee can not visit them at once, then letters of friendly inquiry should be sent. Be especially careful not to make any insinuation in those letters that the persons addressed could have been present if they had so desired. This would not be right unless you absolutely knew it to be a fact, and then what is said would better be kindly spoken when you are face to face. Avoid conveying the impression to the absent member that he is being nagged for not being present. If a letter is written, the following may serve as a model:

DEAR FRIEND:

The prayer-meeting last evening was one of the best we have had for a long time. We are very sorry you were not present to enjoy it with us, and to make it still more interesting. We hope your absence was not caused by the sickness of yourself or others. We shall call to see you soon.

Yours in C. E.,

THE LOOKOUT COMMITTEE.

Jan. 15.

It is not necessary to say to any Christian Endeavorer, that in writing the truth should always be stated modestly, and that there should be no attempt to flatter.

Have the meeting announced from the pulpit. This the pastor will be glad to do, especially if a notice of the meeting is given him. Let the leader, or better still, some member of the Prayer-meeting Committee, write plainly a brief notice to be read from the pulpit at the morning service announcing the meeting for that evening. Then in the evening have a notice for the pastor to read, of the young people's prayer-meeting on the following Sunday. You should not expect your pastor to make any announcement of the meeting unless the notice is prepared and handed

to him or left on the pulpit. He has enough to attend to without doing a part of the work of the Prayer-meeting Committee. Select some member of this committee to prepare the pulpit notices for one month, and another member to furnish the press notices for the same time. Fix the responsibility on some individual. "What is everybody's business is nobody's business."

The following will be suggestive:

The prayer-meeting of the Y. P. S. C. E. will be held from 6 to 7 o'clock this evening in the lecture-room of the church. The subject is 'Doing the will of God.' Miss Nellie Graves will lead the meeting. All young people, whether members of any church or not, are cordially invited to attend.

THE PRAYER-MEETING COMMITTEE.

Use no stereotyped form of announcement. You might say in one of your press notices:

The young people of the First Christian Church would like to have the pleasure of welcoming to their prayer-meeting next Sunday all young men and young women who are strangers in the city. Meeting begins at 6 o'clock. Church

at the corner of Sixth and Vine streets. Reception committee at the door.

Make use of the printing press. Advertise. Put brains in it, and advertise. It pays better in the Lord's work than in business. In almost every city and town every local paper will be glad to publish notices of Endeavor meetings, free of charge, if the "copy" is furnished. There is no good reason why the daily and weekly newspapers should not be used in securing a larger attendance at the prayermeetings, even if it costs something to have a "local" inserted. Let it be said to the honor of the editors and publishers of almost all the papers in the land that they are in such hearty sympathy with the Endeavor movement that they cheerfully assist in its advancement without receiving or expecting any financial remuneration therefor.

The member of the Prayer-meeting Committee chosen to do so, should prepare the notice early in the week and hand it to the pastor to be incorporated in his announcements, or it may be given directly to the paper at the proper time.

The local C. E. Union might have, if the request were made, an "Endeavor Column" in one or more of the city papers, where all their announcements could be made from time to time, and the notices and other important items concerning the work of the societies be inserted. The space should be equally divided between the societies represented in the union, and a member selected from each society to act as "reporter." This plan will work well, if it is worked.

Then there is the invitation for the hotel, the depot, the street car, and the postoffice. Have neat placards printed in two or more colors, and, if permission is given, post them in the various places indicated. A modest frame and a glass to protect from dust are advisable. Do not have anything "loud" about them. This would be sufficient:

THE PRAYER MEETINGS

of the

Y. P. S. C. E.

of the

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 571 Vine Street,

Are Held Every Sunday, at 6 P. M.

All Young People Will Be Welcome.

There is also the invitation card for the use of the members of the Prayer-meeting Committee. These cards can be had for a trifle from the denominational publishing house of your society, as they are usually kept in stock.

In addition to this, it would be well for every member of the society to have an invitation card for his own or her own use. An ordinary visiting card for the young women and a business card for the young men, having on its reverse side an invitation to attend the prayer-meetings, would be an excellent thing. The extra cost, if any, for the invitation, would be very small to each one if several members had cards printed at the same time, which they could easily arrange to do. It will

be seen that the cards need not be alike for any two persons. Any style of card may be selected that each individual chooses. I would have on the reverse side of the card an invitation similar to the one suggested for hotels and depots, or such an invitation as this:

The prayer-meetings of the Y. P. S. C. E. of Calvary Presbyterian Church, 867 Broadway, are held every Sunday at 6 P. M. You are cordially invited to attend. Please ask your young friends to come with you.

Use the printing press freely, but do not depend upon it. Extend personal invitations. It is good to advertise, but personal solicitation is better to increase the attendance. Imitate the zealous D. L. Moody. One of his first efforts as a young convert was to hire four pews in Plymouth Church, Chicago, and keep them full of young men every Sunday, and then to fill up a mission school on the North Side, and he has kept at this business of filling up churches ever since.

Tact, which is the application of good sense and wisdom to work, is necessary—

very necessary—in order to receive a hearty response from those who are invited.

A church in a certain community, feeling the need of special efforts to reach the non-church going class, appointed committees to canvass the neighborhood and invite them to attend the services. A lady, on one of the committees, called at a residence and the bell was answered by the gentleman of the house. She said, "Mr. B—, I am on the committee recently appointed by our church to visit all the sinners in the neighborhood to invite them to church, and I just thought I would call on you first!" It is needless to say that the man was repelled. The invitation was not accepted. The woman who visited him was wanting in tact.

If persons who have piety, wisdom and discretion, can make the canvass from house to house to invite the young people in the vicinity of the church to attend the prayer-meetings, it should by all means be done. Give them a cordial, hearty,

sincere invitation to come. Avoid both formalism and flattery. Leave a card announcing the time and place for the meeting. If they do not come, call again, if your wisdom and good sense tell you it is the thing to do, and renew the invitation. Be sure to invite strange young people who move into the neighborhood of the church, and do it without delay. If they have not been in the habit of attending church or a young people's prayer-meeting, they may come now before they choose their associates. If they have attended elsewhere, they will appreciate your interest in them none the less. Go to their homes, if agreeable to them, and accompany them to the meetings, but do not impose your services upon them. Modestly offer yourself as an escort, and your good judgment will tell you whether your company will be acceptable or not.

Talk the meeting up. Not simply talk about it, but talk it up. A prayer-meeting can be as effectually killed before it begins as it can while it is in progress. Speak disparagingly of the last meeting;

criticise those who took part; tell how discordant the singing was; say that the prayers were prosy; tell of the mistakes that were made, and the meeting will be a failure in attendance, in interest, in every way. But talk it up, above the last or the coming social, above business, above everything else, and there will be a marked improvement in the meeting. A few persons, who are of very little help to a prayer-meeting, who take no part in it worth mentioning—and those are the only persons who will do so-can talk about the meeting till they kill it. Talk it up. Tell what a good meeting the last one was, how much you missed by not being there, and how much you were missed.

Make the meeting so interesting that all who come once will come again. To do this do not think that the prayer-meeting should be changed to something else, but strive to make it so cheerful, prayerful and good that all will be made to realize that it has been pleasant and profitable to be there. If to "preach the

gospel and advertise" is a good way for a preacher to get and hold an audience, the same plan must be carried out in a young people's prayer-meeting. Have the meetings of so high an order that all will go away realizing that they have not only been entertained but benefited, then they will come again.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE PRAYER-MEETING.

It is not an uncommon thing for a young people's prayer-meeting to be at least a partial failure because the Social Committee has not done its duty. The prevailing opinion of the members of this committee is that their work is wholly outside of the prayer-meeting. and that it is not in any way auxiliary to it. This idea is erroneous. They can and ought to make their work help the prayer-meeting, which is the key-stone of the arch of Christian Endeavor. This they may do both directly and indirectly. The members of the Social Committee at least have it in their power to give the meeting a good start, and everyone knows what a great advantage there is in that. If the meeting does not start off well it is almost certain to be a failure.

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The Social Committee should go early. Be the first person present at every meeting. Remember you are the Reception Committee. If the room is not in order-and in all probability it will not be—go early enough to put it in order before anyone else arrives. Pick up the lesson leaves used in the Sunday-school in the morning, and other scraps of paper that may be scattered about; arrange the chairs; distribute the hymnbooks and Bibles; prepare the leader's table by placing upon it a Bible, hymnbook, topic and invitation cards, and, if the Flower Committee has forgotten part of its work, a bouquet or two if possible; see that the "lamps are trimmed and burning," and the room properly warmed and ventilated, if the janitor has neglected to do so.

You would not want an invited company of young people to come to your homes and find you unprepared to receive them. Paul's injunction, "Let everthing be done decently and in order," will apply quite well to everything

connected with the prayer-meeting. Go early, and see that the room is comfortable, orderly and tidy. Have everything in readiness to receive your guests when they arrive.

Receive, at the door, all who come. Give everyone, and especially strangers, a cordial greeting. Let yours be "free-hearted hospitality." Be bright, active, courteous, "sunshiny." Extend a royal welcome. Act as ushers. Fill up the front seats first. Besides disturbing the meeting, it is quite embarrassing to many to be compelled to take a front seat after the rear seats are all occupied and the meeting begun. See that there are no vacant seats immediately in front of the leader, for the leader of a prayer-meeting, like nature, "abhors a vacuum," but, unlike nature, has not the power to fill it.

Every member of the society ought to be willing to take a front seat at every meeting, and he is inexcusable if he does not. The importance of the members' sitting near the leader has so often been pointed out that it would be quite useless to speak of it again if it were not so generally disregarded. What I am saying cannot be understood as being for information. It is certainly not so intended. It is only meant for emphasis. Again I repeat, sit near the leader at every meeting. Let the members of the Social Committee do all they can, as ushers and otherwise, to see that this is done. It will improve the meeting greatly.

Hand to everyone who comes into the room during the singing of a hymn, or while the audience is engaged in responsive reading, a hymn-book or Bible open at the proper place—book right side up. To do this conveniently, have some hymn books and Bibles at your station near the door, and in your hand a book already open at the hymn that is being sung, or at the chapter that is being read. When you have seated the person, hand him the book.

Be sociable. Nothing is worth so much to the prayer-meeting that costs so little. Take positions near the door, and allow no person to go out of the room at the close of the meeting without giving him a hearty handshake and a genuine, "Glad to see you. Come again. Please invite your friends to come too."

If there are strangers present, ask their names and place of residence and introduce them to others. If they expect to remain long, call on them during the week and ask others to call. In this way you will make them regular attendants at the prayer-meeting. If you cannot remember the name and place of residence, write them down at once in a little memorandum book kept for that purpose. Tell the pastor about them. He would be glad to call, and help you make them feel at home. Sociability is a power for good too often neglected. Use it, cultivate it, and thus assist in improving the prayer-meeting. all your work as a Social Committee tributary to this end. Be sociable to all, at all times. Nothing will improve the prayer-meeting more.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRAYER-MEETING COMMITTEE AND ITS WORK.

A PART of the work of the Prayer-meeting Committee is to prepare a list of subjects for the meetings, but as the "uniform topics" are now generally used, this part of their work is in most instances done by others for the committee, and it is better that it should be. The subjects selected are usually preferable to those an inexperienced committee would choose; the help offered, in the various published expositions and illustrations of the uniform topics, is a decided advantage; visitors may know what the subject of the meeting will be and may come better prepared to take part; while the cost to the society of having the subjects printed is reduced to a mere trifle. These uniform topics, neatly printed on card-board, may be obtained (54)

from the denominational publishing houses of any society or from the Golden Rule Publishing Co., Boston, Mass.

Another part of the work of this Committee is that of selecting leaders. In order to make the meeting more interesting and helpful, great pains should be taken in making these selections. Study carefully the subject, Scripture texts and leader before the appointment is made. See that there is, as far as possible, mutual adaptation of the subject and leader. To illustrate:

The topic for the meeting some months ago, "Punishment for Sin; Its Certainty," was not a proper subject to be assigned to an innocent little girl, who scarcely knows by experience what sin is. That should have been given to some young man who has repented in sack-cloth and ashes and reformed after having "sown his wild oats," if there is such a person in the society. He will be more likely to make the meeting a success than one who has not drank so deeply of the bitter cup of sin.

If there is to be a "Praise Service," put the meeting in the hands of some young lady whose soul is overflowing with songs of thanksgiving and gladness. All will be pleased and helped by the way she will conduct the meeting.

"Preparing the Way of the Lord," was one of the subjects some time ago, and which was well adapted to a leader who, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Daniel, or King Josiah, would not, under any circumstances, make any compromise with sin in any of its forms. Or to one who, like the Apostle Paul, in addition to this splendid characteristic, has the missionary spirit in great measure.

Let the temperance meetings be led by those who give forth no uncertain sound on the great curse of the age. But these illustrations are sufficient. The members of the Prayer-meeting Committee ought to be persons who are well acquainted with every member of the society, and who will give the appointment of leaders the attention it deserves. The same suit of ready-made clothing will not fit every person equally well. It would be well to have a "leaders' conference 's soon after the appointments have been made by the Prayermeeting Committee for the quarter to talk over the prospective meetings, and if it is found at that meeting that a mistake has been made in the selection of any leader, an exchange of leaders and topics can be effected to the mutual advantage of both leaders and with profit to the meeting. Of course the members of the Prayer-meeting Committee should be present at the leaders' conference.

If for any good reason the leaders are not all selected at one time for the coming quarter, the appointment should be made and the subject assigned at least two weeks before the time for the meeting. This will give the leader ample time to make all necessary preparation, which is but just to him and to those who will be at the meeting.

It is also a part of the work of this

committee to have the general oversight of the meetings. Long, awkward pauses are likely to occur, especially if the leader is inexperienced, or has not made suitable preparation, or if others have failed to come prepared. These pauses are very embarrassing to many, and particularly annoying to the leader, and as they will most effectually kill the meeting, the committee should guard against them as much as possible by previously arranging with a number of persons to take part as soon as the interest appears to be decreasing. It requires both grit and grace to take hold of the "cold end" of a prayer-meeting, but it must be done. Let the Prayer-meeting Committee see those best qualified to act in such an emergency and get them to promise to do so.

It is the further duty of the Prayermeeting Committee, assisted by the Music Committee, to aid the leader in preparing a program or order of exercises for the meeting. This may be at least partially arranged at the leaders' conference. No two meetings should be conducted in exactly the same way. There are two extremes to avoid, one is monotony, the other novelty, and one is as fatal to the profitableness of the meeting as the other. Choose the happy medium — variety. Have the same general plan, with some variation each time. Do not allow the meeting to be turned into a singing-school or lyceum. These are very well in their places, but the hour and place appointed for the prayer-meeting are not the most appropriate.

The following may be suggestive to those who have had but little experience:

ORDER OF EXERCISES, No. 1.

- 1. One or two songs suited to the subject of the meeting.
- 2. Responsive Scripture reading by the leader and the audience.
 - 3. Two or three short, definite prayers.
 - 4. A verse or two of an appropriate song.
- 5. Reading of lesson texts, and brief, pointed remarks by the leader, followed by a few earnest words of prayer.
- 6. Two or three verses of some soul-stirring song.

- 7. Meeting open to all for hearty, voluntary participation by brief remarks, fervent prayers, short Scripture quotations, appropriate recitations, spirited singing.
- 8. Announcements, collection, doxology, Mizpah benediction.

ORDER OF EXERCISES, No. 2.

- 1. Song suited to the evening hour, such as, "Fading, still fading," "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide," or, "Sun of my soul, thou Savior dear."
- 2. Silent prayer by all, followed by audible prayer by the leader, or some one previously appointed.
 - 3. Solo or duet of devotional character.
- 4. Short Scripture lesson, say Psa. 1; Rom. 12; Titus 2, or James 2, read responsively, with an occasional apt remark by the leader.
 - 5. The Lord's prayer repeated in concert.
- 6. Song on the subject of prayer. "Sweet hour of prayer," "I love to steal awhile away," "What a Friend we have in Jesus," "Just as I am, without one plea," are all appropriate.
- 7. Announcement of the subject and texts by the leader, followed by prompt, voluntary participation in the meeting by all present.
- 8. Closing remarks by the leader—a few earnest, thankful sentences—announcements clearly and concisely made, a verse of song, and benedictory prayer by the leader or some other person.

ORDER OF EXERCISES, No. 3.

- 1. A song all will sing. "Lo, the army of our King," "Shall we gather at the river?" "All hail the power of Jesus' name," or some other universal favorite should be selected.
- 2. Sentence prayers by many in quick succession.
- 3. A brief biographical sketch of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Matthew, Paul, etc., when the Scripture lesson is selected from either of their writings.
 - 4. Concert reading of the lesson.
- 5. Familiar song—solo or duet—congregation singing the chorus.
 - 6. Prayer by the leader.
 - 7. Meeting open for voluntary participation.
- 8. Invitation by the leader or pastor to confess Christ, song, announcements, closing prayer.

As soon after the meeting as practicable the Prayer-meeting Committee should encourage and compliment all who have taken part in the meeting, who are justly deserving. Care should be taken, of course, not to give undue or overdue praise. No complimentary remarks at all are better than too many. The person may be made to doubt your sincerity if too much is said. Flattery is a sin, and its very appearance should be avoid-

ed. Be quiet and modest in what you say and do. Encourage the timid, and restrain the ostentatious. Give to each "his portion in due season," jealously guarding yourselves against every form and appearance of "bossism." Do not try to "run things." Let all you say and do be said and done in the spirit of love, and "for Christ and the Church."

CHAPTER VI.

THE WORK OF THE MUSIC COMMITTEE.

The work of the Music Committee is no less important than that of the Prayer-meeting Committee. It is impossible to estimate the power of the Gospel in song over the soul. I verily believe that more persons have been sung into the kingdom of righteousness than have been preached into it. The sweet story of Jesus and his love, when wedded to rhythm and music, sweeps everything before it. It is a force that is irresistible when sung with loyal lips from consecrated hearts.

This committee, composed, as all committees should be, of persons who will do, promptly and cheerfully, the work assigned them, should co-operate with the leader in selecting songs that shall be, as far as possible, in harmony with the line of thought indicated for the meeting. It

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is not necessary to use one kind of hymnbook exclusively at any meeting, though it is usually better to do so for general singing, as it prevents confusion and lessens the possibility of being mistaken as to the hymn it is desired to have sung. For half the congregation to sing one hymn and the other half another hymn at the same time would be almost as ludicrous a blunder as could well be made.

No unfamiliar songs should be selected for all to try to sing. When all are asked and expected to sing, the song selected ought to be one that all can sing. There are some hymns and some tunes that have never grown old. Both words and music are always fresh and new, and everybody delights to sing them. These should have the preference when making your selections. Do not practice new songs in your prayer-meeting. Have a time especially for that purpose. Remember that the prayer-meeting hour has been set apart for worship, and not for the rehearsal of new songs. It is not the place for "choir practice."

Arrange for a little special singing at each meeting—a solo, duet or quartette touching the subject of the meeting, and, better still, touching the hearts of all present. To do this—the latter—the singing need not be "artistic." It is not necessary that the singers should be graduates from the "Boston Conservatory of Music," or, for that matter, from any other conservatory. Ask some "good old mother in Israel" to sing for you "a song of ye olden time, a hymn of the long ago," and as you listen to her you will wonder why you had not thought to ask her to sing before. Her voice may not be quite as musical as it once was; it may have lost some of its clearness; that rich, sweet cadence that once characterized it may not be there any more; it may occasionally "flat" or "sharp" at the wrong time, but there is still a melody, an inspiration about her singing that is truly soul-stirring. Listen to her as she sings, "My latest sun is sinking fast," or, "One sweetly solemn thought, comes to me o'er and o'er." Did you ever hear

anything more beautiful? Probably some kind-hearted Christian mother will sing, "Where is my wandering boy to-night?" I feel confident, if she will, that every young man who hears her sing, as only a mother can sing, will resolve that his mother shall never have cause to mourn because of his prodigality. Why should the good effect of this song be lost by its being sung with an "operatic air," when there are so many mothers who would put their whole souls into it? And who can tell the value of amother's soul, a mother's love!

I would go further to hear one of the aged saints of God sing one of the songs of Zion than I would to listen to any prima donna who ever graced—or probably oftener disgraced—the stage. If it is a young people's meeting, do not fail to invite the old to sing occasionally. You will enjoy hearing them, and they will be pleased to know that you remember and appreciate them.

Get some person to tell in a few words, aptly chosen, when, by whom, and under

what circumstances, some song suited to the subject of the meeting, was composed. Then let a verse or two of it be sung. Or a verse or two may be sung, then a brief account of its composition given, followed by the singing of a second or third verse. Duffield's "English Hymns" will be of valuable assistance.

Have some person relate, either before or after a verse of it is sung, an incident connected with the singing of some hymn. Some of these incidents are very beautiful. They tell of souls being brought to Christ; of hope restored; of comfort given; of temptations withstood; of friendships renewed. Select each time, if possible, some incident bearing directly on the subject of the meeting. Many of the papers contain, from time to time, material that may be gleaned for future use. Look through your old files of the Golden Rule, Young People's Standard, Our Young Folks and Youth's Companion. "The Life of Knowles Shaw, the Singing Evangelist," can also be consulted to good advantage.

Ask some one to tell which is his favorite hymn, and why it is his favorite. In this way a bit of personal history may be brought to light, or the person's inner life revealed—his temptations, aspirations and desires made known to you, as in no other way, in the hymn he indicates as his favorite—and thus you will be enabled to assist that person in overcoming difficulties and rising to a nobler manhood as you have never been able to do before. This will also afford you an excellent opportunity to reach the associate members. Try it.

One will say, "This song is my favorite because I used to hear my mother sing it so much." Love, gentle, sweet and constant, like a mother's love, will win that person to Christ. Fail not to point out to him the love of God. Isa. 66: 13; Jno. 3: 16, 17. Another person will say, "I was once very sick. A very excellent Christian woman sang this at my bedside. It has ever since been my favorite." Christlike integrity and sympathy will win him to the Savior.

Select some old song and get two or three persons to tell, in a few words, why it is always so new and fresh. It has been translated into various languages, and is everywhere a favorite. Our grandfath ers sang it, and our grandchildren will doubtless sing it. Why is it so universally popular? Is it because the author of the hymn caught an echo of the new song, Rev. 5: 9, and has been able to faintly reproduce it? Does it appeal to a common want? Or are its popularity and vitality due to the music rather than to the words, to the words instead of the music, or to both words and music?

During the week previous to the meeting, a note, something like the following, might be sent through the post-office to two or three members of the society:

DEAR FRIEND:

If you could only sing one song, of all you have ever heard, what would you prefer that song to be, and why? Please reply at the Young People's Meeting next Sunday evening, and oblige, Yours for the Gospel in song.

THE MUSIC COMMITTEE.

See that the remarks about favorite and popular hymns, suggested above, are briefly supplemented something in this manner:

"Our attention has been called to some of the songs composed within the last one hundred years, and we have been told why they have lived so long and are still so young and popular. Now please listen to the reading of a portion of a song composed long before Homer's 'Iliad' was conceived of. 'The-Lord is my strength and song, and he is my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation: my father's God, and I will exalt him.' Ex. 15: 2. Thus it appears that Whittier's beautiful 'Centennial Hymn' was not entirely new in thought, for we see that Moses sang it fifteen hundred years before Christ was born.'

Many songs can be appropriately and beautifully supplemented with a verse or two of some Bible song, and it would be well if the Music Committee would see that it is often done. The Word of God is a wonderful treasure-house. Go to it for true riches.

Speak to the best singers to occasionally start familiar hymns impromptu, that is, without announcing the number or

title of the hymn, or using the organ. This is especially desirable when the interest of the meeting begins to wane, and immediately after an earnest exhortation. The prayers, remarks, quotations and Scripture readings may all be beautifully supplemented in this way. Ask only those who will be most likely to give the tunes the right pitch to do this, otherwise do not suggest it. Not every good singer can give even a familiar tune the right pitch, the first trial he makes, without an instrument.

Sing with the spirit and the understanding also as well as with the voice, and see that everybody else does the same. Strive to express the sentiment of the author of the hymn. David once said he would "make a joyful noise unto the Lord." If there are any in the congregation who can not make a joyful noise when singing, get them to make a noise of some kind, even if they do not sing with "expression." Let the singing usually be, in the strictest sense, congregational. "Let all the people sing." In

order that they may do so, be sure that every person has a book, and that the leader distinctly re-announces any song that may be called for. Do not neglect these little matters. Attention to details is what brings success in anything.

Insist upon all who sing well to always be on time, and to sit and sing together. It would be well to organize a "chorus choir" composed of all the good voices in the society, and let them meet once a week for rehearsal. If there is a large volume of song and one or two get off the tune a little, they are not noticed. Poor singing will kill the meeting. Good singing will revivify it.

Let your consecration as Christian singers be deep, constant and thorough. This couplet should be your motto:

"Take my voice and let me sing Always—only—for my King."

God will not use that voice to win souls that sings comic songs. Churches whose choirs are composed of unconverted persons are practically Christless churches. They have no power. They are not saving the people from their sins. One of the pressing needs in almost every church is for more consecrated young men and young women to sing the Gospel. To be sure there are many of these now, but there should be many more. The more Christ there is in the heart of the singer, the more of Christ there will be in the song; and the more of Christ there is in the song, the more there will be at the close of the service in the hearts of the people. Sing the Gospel, and get others to sing it.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LEADER'S GENERAL PREPARATION.

It is very necessary that suitable preparation be made to lead a young people's prayer-meeting. The leader will certainly fail who does not do so. It would be considered very foolish for a preacher to appear before his audience, or a Sunday-school teacher before her class, who had not made all possible preparation, and it is quite as absurd for any person to attempt to lead a prayer-meeting who has not given the matter the attention that its importance deserves.

I am persuaded, however, that but few leaders are purposely unprepared to conduct a prayer-meeting. Many do not know what is required of them, and therefore do not know what preparation to make, and on that account have failed, wholly or in part, to fit themselves for leaders.

What is the purpose of a young people's prayer-meeting? What is it to lead the meeting? What shall the leader say and do, and what shall he endeavor to have others say and do? These and similar questions must be correctly answered by every successful leader.

The essential purpose of the prayermeeting is to cultivate the spiritual nature of all who attend—to train and develop the devotional spirit. To lead the meeting is to assist every one present in doing this. What is said and done should be with this end in view.

The leader's preparation is of two kinds—general and special, and the first, like a woman's work, is never done. It can and should go on day after day and year after year. If the individual feels that either the general or the special preparation must be neglected, that he cannot do both, by all means let it be the special preparation that is given up. It does not follow, however, that either must be done. I have only said what I have for the purpose of emphasizing the impor-

tance of general preparation. It is most important. Many persons who would not think of attempting to lead a prayer-meeting without having made special preparation give little or no thought, comparatively, to their general preparation. The relation between the two is similar to that of a university course to a hasty investigation of some very important subject, and the knowledge gained thereby. What would the physician know about medicine, or the attorney about law, if the study of these sciences was proceeded with in this way?

The leader's general preparation is very essential to the success of the meeting, and should, if possible, comprise a liberal education. Other things being equal, the person who has the best education will, as a rule, make the best leader. A college or university education is cheap at almost any price, save that of health and godliness. There is great danger, even in our best schools, of the student's becoming all head and no heart. A minister of the gospel informed me not long

since that it took him five years to regain the spirituality he lost while taking a course in a theological seminary! The student should carefully guard himself at this point. He may be losing power instead of gaining it. His heart, if not his head, may be parting with its locks of strength. Sit much at the feet of Him who "spake as never man spake." This is the only absolute preventive of osteo sarcoma—whatever that is—which often accompanies heart failure and loss of power.

A liberal education, contrary to popular opinion in some parts of the world to-day, includes a knowledge of the Bible, and, without a doubt, should be included in the leader's general preparation. He should know what God has said in his Word, first of all, for his own good, and in the second place, that he may tell others. Occasional apt, correct quotations of portions of God's Word during the progress of the meeting by the leader are indeed "like apples of gold in pictures of silver" Prov. 25: 11. But how

can the leader do this if he is ignorant of the Word of God?

Some person asks to have sung, "I love to tell the story." The effect is excellent if, before it is sung, the leader quotes, "Jesus, knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." John 13: 1. "Almost persuaded" is sung, after which, or between the singing of the stanzas the leader repeats, "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee" (Acts 24: 24, 25), and adds, in a sentence or two, that it is extremely hazardous to delay becoming a Christian.

Often a prayer, quotation, song or remark by another may be beautifully sup-

plemented by the leader with a short quotation of Scripture. The whole Bible should be constantly studied, and much of it committed to memory. Make it a point to read not less than two chapters every day, and to memorize at least two verses. By doing this the leader will always have something appropriate to say at all stages and in all conditions of the meeting.

Cultivate piety as a part of your general preparation. Not a sickly, sentimental something, or more aptly nothing, but a true, heroic faith in God, and a "zealous devotion to his service." Study God everywhere, not only in the Bible, but in nature, and in his acts and dealings with mankind. See in nature as well as in revelation (John 3: 16, 17) that God is a loving Father; that he has invariably dealt with us more graciously than we have dealt with ourselves and with each other, and much better than we have deserved. Under every circumstance there should be a loving, confiding trust in God. Do not for a moment countenance the idea, made prominent in some ancient theology, that God is merciless and vindictive. Neither let there be any latent infidelity in the heart. Love God supremely.

Be ever prayerful. Paul's advice to the Christians at Thessalonica was to "pray without ceasing." Our Master spent much time in prayer, and so should we. The thought is beautifully expressed by James Montgomery:

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, The Christian's native air; His watchword at the gate of death, He enters heaven with prayer."

Private devotions are too often neglected altogether, or passed lightly and hastily over. "Enter thy closet and pray" is a commandment as binding upon the disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ as to "repent and be baptized" is upon the alien sinner.

He prays in public most acceptably to God, and most to the edification of those who hear him, who prays oftenest strictly in private.

Cease not to cultivate all of the Christian virtues and graces, if you would make your general preparation as a leader of young people's prayer-meetings thorough and complete. These are iron for the blood, phosphates for the brain, a tonic for the whole system. Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 13 and 1 Pet. 1: 1-11 are pure gold. Study them carefully and practice in your daily life the duties there enjoined, then, when you are called upon to lead the meeting, you will have confidence in yourself, and better still, others will have confidence in you, and will feel, however you may feel about it, that you led the meeting well, and that is the important thing. Strive to be helpful to others. Endeavor to lead every one to the fountain from which you draw your own inspiration. Try to increase your stock of knowledge and goodness day by day. Allow no opportunity to go by unimproved.

Dr. Beecher once preached a very excellent sermon to the students of Andover, and they asked him how long it

took him to prepare it. He replied, in his peculiar way, "Twenty years." It was the outgrowth of his twenty years of experience, study and practice as a preacher of the gospel. Like this should be the leader's general preparation to conduct a young people's prayer-meeting.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LEADER'S SPECIAL PREPARATION.

What preparation should I make to lead the prayer-meeting? How shall I have others assist in making the meeting interesting? What am I to do as leader?" These questions come with peculiar force to the person who has been selected for the first time to conduct a young people's prayer-meeting, but satisfactory answers do not so readily follow.

The most that can be done to assist the leader in his preparation is to suggest. He must decide for himself what is best. Not to have some decision and some sense of propriety is for him to lose his individuality and become purely mechanical in all he says and does. He only acts as he is acted upon. He is at best an imitator, not a leader, and the meeting throughout is cold and formal (83)

because there is no originality, no person with "a mind of his own," in charge of it.

The leader, of course, will have the help of the Music and Prayer-meeting Committees in making his special preparation, but there are still many things he must do for himself. Among these may be mentioned, a careful study of the subject of the meeting and the Scripture texts. The topic should be considered from two standpoints. Decide first what you will say upon the subject, and then what you will assign to others. Consider the subject with reference to its divisions, with a view to getting others to take part in the meeting. Make as many divisions as the topic, number of participants, and interest of the meeting will, in your judgment, justify. Assign one of these divisions to yourself, and the others, after consulting with the Prayermeeting Committee, to persons who are qualified and will promise to give them consideration during the meeting in a few well-chosen words. Give them ample time, say a week or more, for preparation. Impress upon all who may need it, that you do not want an address, but just a few short, crisp sentences—"nuggets of gold."

Sometime during the previous week, or earlier, if they cannot be seen personally, a note similar to the following may be sent by mail, or in some other way, to all who are expected to take part in the meeting in the manner indicated:

DEAR FRIEND:

I have been appointed by the Prayer-meeting Committee to lead our young people's meeting Sunday evening, May 27th. The subject, as you know, is 'The Greatness of Love.' Will you, in the early part of the meeting, give the best definition you can of love? Also the aptest illustration of its greatness? These, of course, you will get from the Bible.

Yours for Christ
MAE WHEELER.

May 17.

The work of notifying those who have been selected to take some special part in the meeting should be divided between the leader and the members of the Prayer-meeting Committee. If the notice is sent out by the Prayer-meeting Committee, it might read somewhat as follows:

DEAR FELLOW-WORKER:

May 17.

"The Greatness of Love" is the topic, as you already know, of the young people's prayer-meeting one week from next Sunday evening. Please come prepared to take part by briefly contrasting love with faith in order to show the greatness of love. Be one of the first to take part in the meeting.

Yours in C. E.,

THE PRAYER-MEETING COMMITTEE.

The leader should consider the arrangement of a program or order of service for the meeting a part of his special preparation. This should be done at a joint meeting of the Music and Prayermeeting Committees with the leader, or at the "leaders' conference." This is an important matter, and should not be overlooked. No one thing is more certain to result in failure and chagrin to the leader, and disappointment to others, than to neglect to have an appropriate and definite order of exercises

for the meeting outlined. It is to the leader what a general's plan, or lack of

a plan, is to the campaign.

The program should be arranged and reduced to writing at least one week before the time for the meeting. It is not to be slavishly followed, to be sure, but it gives the leader confidence, and if properly and thoughtfully prepared keeps the meeting out of the "ruts." One of its purposes is to prevent monotony and routine.

It should not be forgotten in preparing the order of exercises that the meeting is to be a prayer-meeting. Be sure to remember that and plan accordingly. The prayer-meeting is not a musicale or social, though both music and sociability are very appropriate and helpful adjuncts. Let the leader see that the prayer-meeting in name is a prayer-meeting in fact.

The selection of an appropriate Scripture lesson is one of the special duties of the leader. The lesson should be short and should bear directly on the subject

of the meeting, and after its selection the leader ought to thoroughly familiarize himself with it. He should study it word by word and sentence by sentence until he fully understands it; and he should read it and re-read it till he can perfectly convey the meaning of the author. A bungling, stammering attempt at reading God's Word is absolutely inexcusable, even in a person whose ability to read is quite limited. Better read but one sentence and do it well than to attempt more and make a botch of it. Pronounce every word correctly and plainly. Many persons would be surprised if they looked up the proper pronunciation of such familiar Bible names as Gethsemane, Puteoli, Belial, Salome, Athens, Gennesaret, Diana, Gerizim, Naaman, Aquila, and many others. The leader should consult the dictionary on every word in the lesson that he is in the least doubt as to its correct pronunciation. And he should ascertain, to the best of his ability, by consulting standard commentaries and

the Bible, especially the later, for the Bible is its own best commentary, what meaning the author attaches to every word and sentence of the lesson he has selected.

"The Levites caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Neh. 8:7, 8.

The selection of appropriate Scripture texts, to be read by the timid ones and associate members, is a part of the leader's special preparation. This will require time, and the more that is given to it the better. "Search the Scriptures." Let the selections be made as far as possible both with reference to the subject and to the persons who are to read them. The associate members may be brought to Christ by a wise selection of Scripture texts for them to read, followed by an apt remark by the leader, indirectly, making an application of the passage read. To illustrate:

The subject is "The Love of God." An associate member is given John 3:16, 17 to read. When he has finished the leader says, "If God so loved us, ought we not reciprocate that love, and appropriate the salvation he offers? Surely this is not too much for him to expect of us."

Do not have too many Scripture references, especially of your own selection. Better stimulate the study of the Bible in others. Endeavor to do this. When preparing to lead the meeting such requests as the following may be made:

"Which one of the Savior's parables do you think is the best illustration of 'The Love of God'—the subject of our meeting for next Sunday? Please answer at the meeting."

"What does Paul say in his Roman letter about God commending his love toward us? Please find the text and read it at our meeting next Sunday evening."

"What two verses in the first chapter of James make known to us the wonderful love of God? Read them, please, at our next young people's meeting."

"What does John say, in the fourth chapter of his first epistle, God did for us because he loved us, and what does he say, in the following verse, we should do on that account for each other? Please read the two verses indicated at the young people's meeting next Sunday.''

The Scripture texts that the leader selects should be neatly and plainly written or printed on slips of white paper and handed to those who are to read them either before the meeting begins or soon after, and if after the meeting begins, preferably during the singing of a hymn. The leader can leave her station while the audience is singing and go quietly to those for whom the references are intended and give them to those who will promise to read them. See that each one given a reference has a Bible.

The selection of other appropriate quotations belongs, at least in part, to the leader when preparing to lead the meeting. These may be both prose and poetry. Gems of thought, wise maxims, couplets or stanzas of poetry, and terse sentences, all bearing more or less directly on the subject of the meeting, should be selected. They may be clipped

from newspapers and periodicals or copied from books. The help of others might be enlisted in making these selections. Try to have something for all to do out of the meeting as well as in it to add to the interest.

The leader should pray often and especially just before opening the meeting. This is a very essential part of his special preparation. It is a part that cannot possibly be delegated to others, not even to the Prayer-meeting Committee. Secret prayer has a wonderfully transforming influence. "As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered." There is no substitute for secret prayer. It gives strength and courage to the timid.

"There is no power like secret prayer to make The fleshly garments from the Spirit take Its shape and look."

"Secrecy in prayer is essential to its reality and truth. In the presence of others we are influenced more or less to say what we are expected to say, or think we ought to say, and the intellect is concerned with the form of utterance. These are proper considerations in public prayer, but unless the spirit has had real speech with God, spirit with spirit, the personal life breathing its living thoughts, wants, and actual needs, with no one hearing but the Father, prayer is likely to be addressed to the hearers, and do little good as prayer."

"Do not leave the selection of hymns to the last moment, and then hastily turn the pages after you reach the vestry. Choose the hymns carefully to fit the subject, and pick out the particular verses of the hymn that will most help the meeting. Rarely sing more than two verses at a time, and often only one. Consult with the organist and chorister. If the singing is weak and scattering, get the singers to sit together. Get some member who can do it to start familiar hymns spontaneously, without announcement."

This advice by Rev. F. E. Clark, should be carefully considered and heeded by every leader.

Give due attention to every detail. Leave nothing to chance or the "spur of the moment." To do so is to invite failure. Do not be officious, but as far as possible see that the "little things" are not neglected by others.

Michael Angelo was one day explaining to a visitor at his studio what he had been doing since his previous visit. Said he, "I have been at work on this statue. I have retouched this part, polished that, softened this feature, brought out that muscle, given some expression to this lip, and more energy to that limb." "But these are only trifles," remarked the visitor." It may be so," replied the sculptor, "but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle."

Nicholas Poussin, when asked by what means he had gained so high a reputation among other painters in Italy, replied, "Because I have neglected nothing."

The principle is invariably the same, whether applied to a sculptor, an artist, or the leader of a young people's prayermeeting.

CHAPTER IX.

LEADING THE MEETING.

Learn to do by doing." This maxim of Friedrich Froebel, the originator of the kindergarten system of child training, is quite as applicable, with a little variation, to the leading of a young people's prayer-meeting as it is to the training of children. "Learn to lead by leading." This is the better way. It is seldom that theory and practice perfectly agree. Much may be learned, however, by observation and from the experiences of others. Do not try any doubtful experiments, but keep the meeting out of ruts; yes, by all means, lead the meeting.

The leader, with the assistance of the Music and Prayer-meeting Committees, having previously prepared an order of exercises, should come early and begin the meeting on time. To come early is to be present at least ten minutes in

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advance of the hour the meeting is to begin. These ten minutes can be very profitably spent in a preparatory prayermeeting in an adjoining room with the president of the society and the members of the Prayer-meeting Committee. To begin on time is not to delay a minute. There can be no reasonable excuse for waiting. There are almost always some who habitually come late, but it is not courtesy to them-at least not a courtesy they deserve—and especially is it not to those who come early, to delay the opening service until they arrive. They need to be spoken to about their tardiness. It might do them good to have their attention called to Matt. 25: 1-13. Try it. By all means begin on time. Tardiness begets tardiness, a bad habit, for which, if it becomes chronic, it is difficult to find a satisfactory remedy.

As leader of the meeting, be master of the situation. Not in a commanding sort of way, but by self-control, which is everywhere the best generalship. A timid, diffident manner is contagious.

Guard against it, but do not go to the opposite extreme. Be a Christian gentleman, or lady, in your demeanor. Not bold and bombastic in manner, but calm, earnest, dignified, Christ-like. Never scold.

Do not say at the beginning of the meeting, or at any other time, by way of excusing yourself for your lack of preparation, that you are not prepared to lead the meeting, unless you have absolutely had no opportunity to prepare, and then you should state the reason why you are unprepared. You have no more right to attempt to lead a prayer-meeting without having made due preparation than a minister has to preach a purely extemporaneous sermon, and perhaps not as much, for you have probably not had the experience that he has had. If you could have made all necessary preparation to lead the meeting and did not do so, you are perfectly inexcusable, and should not "add insult to injury" by saying, "I am not prepared," and then continue to occupy the position of leader. This

statement from the leader produces a decidedly chilly sensation, and it is more than doubtful if there will be any perceptible reaction from it during the meeting. If you are not prepared, kindly decline in favor of some one who is, or who is better qualified to take charge of the meeting than you are. Do not bring mortification and chagrin to yourself and make the meeting "a glorious failure" by persisting in the attempt to do a thing for which you are not fitted. This is not meant to apply to the person who has done the best she could to prepare to lead, but who feels that "somebody else could do so much better."

Speak briefly and to the point. Remember that a wise man, one who cultivated brevity in speech, has said that "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Prov. 25: 11. Do not squeeze the subject dry nor make it into pulp at the beginning. Pomace and peel are neither appetizing nor nutritious. Do not "exhaust" the subject in your opening speech. Develop but one point in

the lesson, and do that in as few words as possible. Reserve something for an occasional apt remark, if it may be made without seeming to go out of your way, during the progress of the meeting. One of the best ways to induce others to be brief is to be brief yourself in taking part. If there are those who will persist in "preaching a sermon," the leader must kindly remind them that "the time is short and there are others who would like to take part." If they still go on, call for the singing of a familiar hymn—and sing it.

The leader must not "leave the meeting in the hands of the society," after the opening exercises, so completely that his relation to it will cease. Neither should he adhere too rigidly to his order of exercises. The meeting must be somewhat flexible in order to be interesting and profitable.

Announce the subject of the meeting in your opening remarks. There may be persons present who will not know what the topic of the meeting is if this is not done. It is "good form" to do so any way, even if you know you will not be imparting information to any one.

Request, in the beginning, that "versereaders" add a single sentence, if no more, thereto. Or that they preface the passage with some statement of their own. Discourage the reading of long selections of Scripture. Two or three verses at most are usually quite sufficient. The study of the Word of God ought to be encouraged, but the best means of doing it is not by having the prayer-meeting turned into a sort of desultory Biblereading.

Speak distinctly. Talk so every one in the room can readily understand every word that is spoken. There can be no excuse for not doing this. Repeat the number of every hymn that may be called for during the progress of the meeting, in a clear, audible voice. Make any announcements in the same way. If repetition will emphasize this so it will be put into practice, I will say again, "Speak distinctly and loud enough so that all can hear "

Do not say, when the time has almost arrived to close the meeting, "There are ten minutes more, let the time be improved." After some waiting, in breathless silence, in which moments seem hours, a hymn is called for, which ten to one is altogether foreign to the subject and spirit of the meeting, and it is sung to kill time, or a well-meaning brother, in a rambling, off-hand address, betrays the fact that he is "occupying the time." Many an otherwise good meeting has been spoiled by this being done. Say nothing about how much time there is vet. Do not frequently consult your watch, and especially in such a way that everybody in the room will know that is what you are doing. This is as bad as to tell the audience outright what time it is. Endeavor to make them forget that time is passing by the interest you arouse in the meeting.

Close the meeting on time, no difference how well it may be progressing,

or before the time expires and the meeting expires with it. If all seem to have taken part who desire to do so, close the meeting at once. Nothing will be gained by attempting to prolong it. You may "fill out the time," but you will bring in a feeling of dissatisfaction and disappointment. Better close and spend the balance of the time socially. Never run over the time, no difference how much the interest of the meeting may seem to demand it.

Strive to have a wider margin, as leader of the meeting, than any one else has had, by giving due attention to the details of the meeting—to the little things—both before it begins and while it is in progress.

"Little things, aye, little things Make up the sum of life."

President Garfield once said, in one of his speeches to the students of Hiram College, "I was thinking, young ladies and gentlemen, as I sat here this morning, that life is almost wholly made up of margins. The bulk itself of almost any

thing is not what tells. That exists any way. That is expected. That is not what gives the profit or makes the distinguishing difference. The grocer cares little for the great bulk of the price of his tea. It is the few cents between the cost and selling price, which he calls the margin, that particularly interests him. Is this to be great or small is the thing of importance. Millions of dollars change hands in our great marts of trade, just on the question of margins. This same thing is all important in the subject of thought. One mind is not greater than another, perhaps, in the great bulk of its contents, but its margin is greater, that's all. I may know just as much as you do about the general details of a subject, but you can go just a little farther than I can. You have a greater margin than I. You can tell me of some single thought just beyond where I have gone. That is your margin. I must succumb to your superiority."

This hint, alike applicable to the ambitious student and the leader of a young

people's prayer-meeting, who has for his motto, "Excelsior," coming as it does from the wise and honored ruler of one of the greatest nations on earth, shall be the appropriate ending of this chapter.

CHAPTER X.

PREPARING TO TAKE PART.

Much has been said and written from time to time about "those awful pauses ' in the prayer-meeting. leader and the various committees, in many societies, have done and are still doing all they can to prevent them, but have only been partially successful, because they have not always had the hearty co-operation of the other members, some of whom have been negligent, some have not thought it necessary for them to make any special preparation, while others have felt the need of being prepared but have not known how to prepare to take part in the meeting with pleasure to themselves and profit to others.

Perhaps the most essential thing is for every member to fully realize the importance of his own thorough preparation. It is not difficult for one to see that an
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other person ought to have been prepared; that his prayer lacked fervor and directness; that his remarks were disjointed and rambling; that the text of Scripture selected was entirely foreign to the subject; and that the hymn announced was unfamiliar and otherwise unsuited to the subject of the meeting; but it is not so easy for one to see his own faults, or so common for him to think of his own lack of preparation.

It is important to be prepared to take part in the meeting for two reasons especially, either of which is quite sufficient—for the individual's own good, and the benefit of others. Every member ought to be prepared to take part in the meeting, even if he knows he will not have an opportunity to do so. Justice to himself demands it. He receives more help and strength in this way than in any other. Then there should be thorough preparation for the benefit—not pleasure or entertainment—but benefit and edification of others. It is as essential to prepare to take part in the meeting as it is

to lead it. This is contrary to the prevailing practice, but it is true notwithstanding.

Study the subject of the meeting. The preparation will be insufficient without an abundant outlay of intellectual power. An old Greek proverb very truly says, "The gods sell us everything for labor." Look at the subject from every possible angle. Take any subject and it may be studied from many stand-points. Let us suppose the topic is, "The Wisdom of God." It is seen in the beautifully complex nature of man; in the abundant provision God has made for his welfare; in the harmony and utility of nature; in the wonders of revelation; in the history of nations and individuals; in special providences.

Or the subject is, "The Results of Disobedience." It may be studied in one's own experience; in the experiences of others; in history, both sacred and secular; in the book of nature.

Study the subject by frequently reflecting upon it. Turn it over again and again in the mind. Do not be satisfied with knowing something about it, but try and desire to know it all. It is wonderful how much an earnest desire for information will enable a person to obtain it. Study the subject of the prayer-meeting by studying everything. Keep your eyes and ears and heart open, and you will find "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Study the Worl of God, especially the texts selected for the meeting. Do not be satisfied till you are perfectly sure you know the mind of the author, and, if you expect to read some passage or text in the meeting, not till you are quite certain you can convey the sense of the Scripture to other minds.

Alexander Campbell said in one of his lectures on the Penteteuch, that, "As a book for calling forth superior qualities of the art of reading, the Bible is worthy of all consideration. The importance of understanding is not greater than the importance of properly reading a chapter;

and we maintain that it requires more and better learning to read a chapter of the Bible, as it should be read, than to read one of Cicero's orations; and in some European colleges the highest degrees of honor are conferred upon the best readers. It requires hours of study, in many instances, to be able to read one verse or chapter in the Bible, so as to produce the proper effect, upon the reader and the hearer."

Have a concordance and a reference Bible and compare text with text, author with author, prophecy with its fulfillment, type with antitype. Remember that the best Bible commentary is the Bible itself. Take the subject for almost any prayermeeting and you will be surprised how clearly it has been stated, how fully explained, and how aptly illustrated in God's Word if you have never given the matter any consideration.

Memorize at least one verse of Scripture, bearing on the subject of the meeting, to repeat, if "memory verses" are called for by the leader, or it seems at

any time during the meeting to be the proper thing to do. Rev. F. W. Robertson used to have an open Bible before him, committing portions of it to memory while he was dressing in the morning.

The study of the prayers to be found in the Bible, and an endeavor to understand the conditions out of which they arose as urgent desires to God, will assist in prayer, and serve to bring out the revealed will of God for our guidance under the same needs and circumstances.

The following authentic story well illustrates the effect of Biblical knowledge upon prayer, and that, too, where it might be least expected:

"I knew a woman," said Rev. Lewis O. Thompson, "who came from the South so illiterate she could not talk better than a negro, though a white woman; but when she began to pray, after a very little her spirit came to her, she seemed to drop the mortal part, and she fell into the language of the Old Testament. An eminent lawyer said of her that he had heard all the able men in the west, but he

had never heard a human being that affected him as the poor woman did when she got into those higher moods, and brought to her higher nature the use of all that sublime language of the Old Testament that seemed to be congenial to her human nature." Surely there is no prayer-book like the Bible.

- "No book is like the Bible, For childhood, youth and age; Our duty, plain and simple, We find on every page.
- "It came by inspiration,
 A light to guide our way,
 A voice from Him who gave it,
 Reproving when we stray.
- "No book is like the Bible, The blessed book we love; The pilgrim's chart of glory, It leads to God above."

Talk about the subject of the meeting with others. In your efforts to tell what you know about it you will have the knowledge you attempt to convey to others more firmly fixed in your own mind. The teacher is taught by teaching. Paradoxical as it may seem, knowl-

edge is retained by giving it away. Besides you will often receive new ideas from those with whom you converse, and that too from many that you least expect to be able to impart them.

Write upon the subject. Whatever is suggested in glancing over the list of topics ought to be written down at once for future reference. "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man." But if you write, it should not be with a view of committing it to memory; for this will always keep you in bondage, and keep you from acquiring the larger liberty of extempore speech, that is, if you memorize for the purpose of reciting. Only write for the purpose of preserving and fixing in the mind. Good thoughts are very fugitive. Note them down before they take their departure forever.

A story is told of Emerson, that he once rose at dead of night, lighted a candle, and went to his study. Returning, he replied to his wife's anxious inquiry, "Only an idea, my dear." But

the idea was germinant. A poem, or an address, or perhaps a series of letters would be needed to unfold and mirror it forth

An inventor, apparently engaged with the sermon his pastor was preaching, startled those near him by exclaiming, "I've got it!" He arose and left the house. What was it he had discovered? A machine, or rather the essential feature of the machine he had long looked for in vain. Without it all combinations had proved worthless; with this his fortune was easily made.

Prof. Greenleaf once met Arthur T. Pierson, and asked him to give him his best thought during the twenty-four hours previous. He afterward explained that he was wont to collect such best thoughts and give them to his school of girls. A capital suggestion for the prayer-meeting. Preserve, in writing, your best thoughts of it. Believe that anything short of the best will not be good enough.

Gather up illustrations for the meeting. Let them be short, crisp, pointed and well-suited to the subject of the meeting or do not use them. Illustrations are either "feathers for arrows," or "weights without wings," according to the wisdom displayed in selecting and using them. They are very abundant everywhere. They are to be had from nature, sermons, lectures, newspapers, books, magazines, experience, imagination, other people, the Bible. "Truly the attentive listener will hear the grass grow, and at every step in life find illustrations that will prove feathers to guide the arrow of discourse in its flight, and barbs to make it stick." Use your memory. Train it to keep whatever has been intrusted to it. Use the scissors. Clip papers and magazines that you do not care to keep. Use pencil and paper. Copy good illustrations and preserve for ready reference. Have a scrap-book, properly indexed, in which to keep what you clip and write. Bible illustrations are the best. Study the word of God, and you will always have many apt illustrations of every subject selected for the prayer-meeting.

Pray. Pray much. "Pray without ceasing." Cultivate a spirit of prayerfulness day by day. The principle is well established by general consent, as well as by divine precept, that every Christian ought to pray. The active Endeavorer has promised to "pray every day." That is right. He is then in line with the devout servants of God in all ages. "Daniel . . . went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God."

"Oh Thou, by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way;
The path of prayer thyself hast trod:
Lord, teach us how to pray!"

Avoid "vain repetitions" in prayer. Eschew conventional forms and "ritualistic recitations" when making your wants known to God. Be brief in your private as well as your public devotions.

Thank God always for what he has done for yourself and others, and tell him in a few sentences what you think you need. Do not be a pitiful complainer, or an incessant beggar. Nothing is more despicable after all that God has done for you. Be exceedingly grateful for all of his mercies. If the way seems dark, do not go to God complainingly, but say,

- " "I know not what's before me, My way I cannot see, But I know that Jesus leads me. And that's enough for me.
 - "Though friends may all forsake me, And earthly comforts flee, There's one who'll never leave me, And that's enough for me.
 - "Though fall the tears of sorrow, Let grief my portion be, I've Jesus ever with me, That's joy enough for me.''

Yes, by all means, in preparing to take part in a young people's prayer-meeting, pray. Do not "say your prayers," but pray.

Overcome timidity, if possible, but if not possible, do your duty regardless of it. But two things are necessary-have something to say, and say it. Do the best you can in both of these things this time and you can do better next time, both in preparing something to say and in saving it.

It may be encouraging to know that the most experienced speakers often suffer from audience fright. Cicero has said of himself, that "he grew pale at the beginning of a speech, and felt a tremor in every part of his frame." "I am an old man," said Luther, "and have been a long time occupied in preaching, but I never ascend the pulpit without a tremor." Tierney, the great parliamentarian, used to say that he never rose in the House of Commons without feeling his knees tremble under him. It is related of Livingstone, the great African explorer, that the first time he tried to preach for a minister who was sick, he could not say a word after reading his text, and that he took his hat and went away, leaving the service unfinished. An evangelist of almost national reputation said to me recently at the close of a Thanksgiving service, where, by invitation, he had preached the sermon, "I trembled like an aspen leaf."

Scores more of illustrations could be given showing that timidity and embarrassment are not confined to those who take part in young people's prayer-meetings. Make as thorough preparation as possible, then summon all your willpower and "launch out into the deep." There is no other way. "England expects every man to do his duty." As was said in the prayer-meeting conference during the International C. E. Convention held at Philadelphia in '89, "Be willing to break down for Christ." Determine, as a part of your preparation, that you will do your whole duty "for Christ and the Church," and do it.

Prepare to do, as well as you can, whatever you have been asked to do by the leader or any member of either of the committees. Christian courtesy requires

it of you. Something else may suit you better, but if the leader has desired you to take part in a certain way, cheerfully comply with the request. Do not neglect or refuse to take part in the manner indicated. Be quick to promise and quicker to perform what you have promised. And even when a formal promise has not been made, the request is quite as binding. I have known members to completely ignore the request to answer a simple question bearing on the subject of the meeting. This is not right, and of course ought not to be. If this has ever happened in your case, please do not allow it to occur again.

CHAPTER XI.

TAKING PART.

THE first essential in taking part in a young people's prayer-meeting is to concentrate the mind on the purpose of the meeting—to strive to appreciate the fact that you are not present to entertain others or that you may be entertained, but for the purpose of worshiping God and thus edifying yourself and others. Thoughtlessness too often characterizes religious assemblies of all kinds. Proper attention to the object of the meeting can and should be given before the meeting begins-actual part-taking-by getting one's self in touch and sympathy with the subject and spirit of the meeting, and into vital communion with God. Without this, participation will be cold, formal and lifeless, and of course void of any good results. There must be the glow and warmth of spirituality origin-(120)

ated and fostered by an intimate, gracious knowledge of God. This may be secured by a thoughtful contemplation of God, and a prayerful study of his Word. Rush not into the presence of the Almighty, in the public assembly of worshipers, unprepared by meditation. No person would think for a moment of presenting himself in the presence of an earthly. sovereign in this manner, and why should the Supreme Ruler of the universe be approached with such inexcusable rashness? The individual whose mind is distracted, or filled with pleasure, or engrossed with business can not worship God acceptably. "The true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." John 4: 23. The constant aspiration should be, "Nearer, my God, to thee." Let the meditation and assurance of the heart, as well as the song of peace and gladness be,

> "I know I love thee better Lord, Than any earthly joy, For thou hast given me a peace, Which nothing can destroy."

Until this is characteristic of the person, either in desire or reality, he is not in a proper condition of mind and heart to take part in the meeting to the best advantage. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts."

There are two commendable ways of taking part in a prayer-meeting—silently and audibly—and one is the complement of the other. A person is better qualified to participate audibly who has lifted his heart to God in silent prayer. Care should be taken, however, not to make a show of the fact that you are engaged in secret devotion. To make any such display or demonstration is Phariseeism and an abomination in the sight of others and of God. Do not advertise in any way that you are "saying your prayers," or that you are about to say them.

When the interest of the meeting will justify, it is exceedingly helpful to have the entire audience engage in silent prayer. No infallible rule can be given for judging of the proper condition, but it is safe to say that if the spiritual at-

mosphere is not favorable it is more likely to be an injury than otherwise. It may easily be overdone, and I am sure often is carried to a hurtful extreme. Tact and wisdom are needed by the leader in nothing so much as in knowing when, how often, for what purpose, and for what length of time to request the audience to unite in silent prayer. But whenever the request is made, it should be promptly heeded by all. Every praying member should pray.

In taking part audibly, this word—audibly—should have its full meaning, i. e., "in a manner to be heard." There can be no sufficient excuse for not doing so. A person may be timid or embarrassed, but even then he can speak loud enough to be heard by all in any ordinary room. The individual who has this fault should by all means overcome it, I mean the fault of habitually speaking in an undertone.

Then the opposite extreme, the loud, sophomoric, declamatory style, so peculiar to some, is equally if not more objec-

tionable. This "national holiday style of oratory" is quite out of place in a young people's prayer-meeting, whatever may be said of it elsewhere. If you can. be perfectly natural and speak in a natural tone of voice. The "holy tone," the whining manner, the inflated style are all out of order. Be yourself. Have something to say, and say it in the most natural way possible, which is the best. Cultivate an ordinary conversational tone and manner. Do not try to "make a speech," but just tell what you have to say, and leave the speech-making for "the other fellow."

Be brief in taking part. Spurgeon said, "I never like to hear one of my people pray for half an hour and conclude by asking the Lord to forgive our shortcomings." If there are sixty persons present who ought to take part in the meeting each individual is only entitled to one-sixtieth of the time at most. including the time spent in singing and responsive reading. When this is realized no one will appropriate that which does not belong to him, until others have had an opportunity to do their duty. If they fail in this, and you can avoid creating the impression that you are "talking to kill time," you can with perfect propriety occupy more time than your equal share. Probably the best way to proceed is to take part early in the meeting by occupying no more than your proportion of the time, and afterwards, if the meeting drags, briefly take part again.

Do not try to present more than one thought in your remarks, and let your prayer be short and to the point. Ask God for something and without "vain repetitions," and express your thankfulness without verbosity.

Do not take part in the same way in every meeting. This for your own good, as well as the edification of others. There is danger of one's using the same phraseology unconsciously to himself, but painfully apparent to those who hear him from time to time. This habit can be broken up by careful attention and by varying the manner of participation. If

you lead in prayer at one meeting, at subsequent meetings read a text of Scripture and comment briefly upon it; recite an appropriate stanza or two of poetry; answer a question that comes naturally out of the subject of the meeting; sing a solo, if God has given you the ability to do so; read a short, apt selection from some author; quote a suitable passage of Scripture; point out a lessón in the portion of God's Word read by the leader at the beginning of the meeting; call attention to a truth in some quotation or remark made by another; or prepare and read a short paper. Be eclectic. Say what you think will be most helpful each time.

Take the part assigned you by the leader or Program Committee. Not to do this is, to say the least, discourteous to them. They have a perfect right to expect you to keep your promise, made in fact or implied by your being a member of the society, and one is just as binding as the other. This is said for those who seem to think themselves "privileged

characters," and who will not respond unless the request is in perfect harmony with their wishes, whims or caprices, as the case may be. If no request has been made, then, of course, take the part that in your judgment will be best for the interest of the meeting.

In participating in the meeting do not tell how you feel. Feeling is deceptive. Jacob felt quite certain that Joseph was dead, Gen. 37: 32-35, but he was mistaken. It is not uncommon to hear persons say, "I feel that I'm a Christian," or "I feel that I'm a child of God." If such persons really mean what their language indicates-if their only assurance of salvation is feeling—then they must be in a very unsatisfactory condition of mind and heart. If they have better evidence of pardon than feeling, then they are making a very unhappy choice of words, to say the least, to give expression of their condition by repeatedly telling how they feel. Their testimony is practically worthless. The world does not care how a Christian feels. Such evidence would not be taken in any court of law in the land in the most trivial case. How any person feels is of no value as evidence.

Paul does not remind the Christians at Rome of how they felt, when he says, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto right-eousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Rom. 6: 16, 17.

When the leader calls for sentenceprayers, there should be a prompt response on the part of every member, and that too with the meaning of the request carefully heeded. I have often been present at young people's meetings when the leader has asked for sentence-prayers, when his wish has been utterly disregarded. Long, rambling, wordy medleys of phrases, clauses and sentences—all commonplace and often the merest platitudes—have been uttered in response! A sentence-prayer is a prayer in one sentence, and Webster defines sentence as, "a combination of words, complete as expressing a thought."

If the request of the leader is for sentence-prayers touching some one thing, it would be very inconsistent to pray for something different at that time. If the Sunday-school is made a subject of prayer do not ask God to "bless the Kurds of Siberia or the natives of Patagonia."

An excellent plan is for one sentenceprayer to supplement the one immediately preceding it. As an illustration, sentence prayers might be offered by different persons, for the society, somewhat as follows:

"Dear Father in heaven, bless the members of this society—Give grace and wisdom to us all, that we may ever walk uprightly before thee—Qualify us for greater usefulness in thy service—Help us to be very diligent in the discharge of our several duties—Make us to realize the need and the blessedness of being soul-winners—May the spirit of Christ our Savior be pre-eminently ours—

Give us in great abundance of thy Holy Spirit, and let a double portion rest upon our president—Bless all the officers and the members of the various committees—Let thy benediction rest upon the absent members—Give all who are tempted sufficient strength to withstand the temptation—May the promises of thy Word be a source of comfort to those who are afflicted—May we ever be thankful for the blessing of health—And for the many other blessings thou art continually bestowing upon us.—Amen.'

Take part in the meeting by showing that you are interested. Be attentive and appreciative of others. Do not be turning the leaves of the hymn-book or writing on the margins of the leaves or elsewhere, or in any other way detract from the interest of the meeting by not being an attentive listener. Blessed are they who take part in a young people's prayer-meeting, or in any other worship ing assembly, by being appreciative auditors!

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONSECRATION MEETING.

It would be difficult to place too much emphasis on the importance of the monthly consecration meeting. It is the thermometer of the society, and should always indicate "summer heat," which is the normal temperature.

A cold prayer-meeting is conceded to be one of the most unpleasant and uninviting places in the world, but even worse than a cold prayer-meeting is a lifeless, formal consecration meeting, where every thing is said and done in a listless, indifferent manner. Spirituality and consecration cannot exist in such an atmosphere. A tropical plant will soon perish if transplanted into a frigid climate.

The importance of the consecration meeting is quite generally recognized, I am glad to say, but it ought to be universally so. No young Christian should

allow a meeting to pass without re-consecrating himself to God. A vessel may easily drift out of the harbor, but it can only be brought into it again by a proper effort. It will never drift back. Just so it is with the Christian. Business, or pleasure, or study, or something else may so engross the attention that the individual does not realize that he is drifting out to sea. The consecration meeting gives him an opportunity to take his bearing; to ascertain his latitude and longitude; and to determine the position of his spiritual craft—the distance and direction—from the harbor.

It is profitable to all to frequently sit at the feet of the past, and to repeat again the lessons taught us by experience. It is needless to say that this should not be done with morbid and undue self-introspection. There is less danger of this, however, than of its being wholly neglected. The tendency of young people is to anticipate the future to the partial or complete neglect of the past. It is not as pleasant to review the mistakes and

shortcomings of the past, and profit by them, as it is to preview the glories and excellencies of the future; hence the lessons of "the days that are no more" are neglected.

When Moses was addressing the children of Israel for the last time, just before his final separation from them, his advice was that they "ask of the days that are past, which were before thee," Deut. 4: 32, and his audience, with the exception of the two old men, Caleb and Joshua, was composed entirely of young people. Num. 26: 63-65; Deut. 2: 14, 15.

It is the custom in most societies to make the last regular prayer-meeting in the month a consecration or experience meeting, and to call the roll of members. "The responses of the active members who are present shall be considered as a renewed expression of allegiance to Christ." So says the "model constitution," which has been adopted by nearly all societies.

The distinguishing and peculiar feature of the consecration meeting, or rather,

one of the peculiar features, is the rollcall. It has its advantages, and probably some disadvantages, over the ordinary prayer-meeting. Among the former are, first, the recognition of the individual, which is of no little importance to him, especially in large societies where he is in constant danger of only being recognized in a general, wholesale way; secondly, the sense of obligation to himself, to others, to God, that it brings to the person whose name is called; thirdly, it impresses the importance and necessity of knowing whether his name is recorded in the "Lamb's book of life," and if he has the assurance that it is there written, then the joy of such blessed knowledge; and fourthly, the information it gives, in a very quiet but practical way, to the Lookout and Prayer-meeting Committees.

Sometimes it is objected that once a month is too often to have a consecration meeting, but really this objection is without support. Every prayer-meeting ought to be a consecration meeting, and in fact re-consecration ought to be characteristic

of every day we live. A repetition of the vows we have made to Christ cannot too often occur.

This objection may have originated in the idea, somewhat prevalent, that the consecration of one's self to God is a terrible ordeal through which to pass, though it is much more likely to be on account of the thoughtless, slip-shod manner in which so many say, "I reconsecrate myself." Webster defines consecration as "the act or ceremony of separating from a common to a sacred use, or of devoting and dedicating a person or thing to the service of God." For a person to dedicate himself to the service of God ought to be recognized as an important and pleasant duty. There is nothing terrible and awful about it, neither is it a light and frivolous matter.

The consecration meeting, probably more than any other, is in danger of becoming stereotyped, owing to the calling of the roll, which tends, on account of the way in which it is so often done, to give it a set form. The same order is

followed at each meeting, and besides there seems to be a lack of flexibility; hence the consecration meeting is sometimes only another name for humdrum and monotony, and all seem glad when it is over, and that it will not occur again for a month. This ought not to be so. The consecration meeting should really, if any difference, be the best meeting of the whole month, and it is very possible to make it such.

To do this, vary the order and exercises of the meeting. This is the first essential thing to do. An order that is not as good as the one you have been following is better, for a change, than to continue with the old one indefinitely. Care must be taken to prevent the meeting being monotonous. By all means, and any means, keep it out of ruts.

Not only change the order of the meeting from time to time, but let each member study variety in the manner of responding to the roll-call. To be sure every one must utter the desire and purpose of his heart in whatever way he responds. Perfect honesty should characterize every word that is spoken. The consecration meeting is a suitable time for self-examination as well as dedication of one's self to God, and should have both for its object.

A person responds, when his name is called, by saying, "I reconsecrate myself to God." Before any such statement is made by any individual he ought to be perfectly sure that he has ever really consecrated himself to God in the fullest and truest sense. Again let me say that the strictest self-examination should be peculiarly characteristic of every consecration meeting. "Absolute honesty and sincerity are the qualities to be encouraged and insisted upon."

Consider your special fitness to do some one thing, and at the roll-call speak of it briefly and modestly, and consecrate yourself to that particular work. It may be that you have the ability to sing the gospel as many others cannot; the peculiar fitness to do house to house canvassing in the interest of the church or

Sunday-school; the talent to assist in the Junior work; the qualifications to teach in the Sunday-school; the gift, for it is a gift from God, to make money honestly and rapidly; or the faculty of doing personal, face to face work for the Master. Study yourself, and whatever God-given talent you discover, consecrate it to "Christ and the Church."

Think of the duties you owe to yourself, and consecrate yourself to their performance. Among these there is the duty of studying God's Word daily; of constantly cultivating the spirit of thankfulness; of developing the nobler faculties of the mind; of resisting temptation; and of striving to grow into the likeness and image of Christ.

Realize the needs of others and the obligations you are under to them, and consecrate yourself accordingly. It may be to minister to the poor; send the gospel to the heathen; comfort the afflicted encourage your pastor; visit strangers; or co-operate with others in making the

prayer-meetings more interesting and profitable.

Consecration to the performance of one duty does not release a person from his obligation to perform others if he can do so. At most it only gives one duty the preference over others for the simple reason that more good may be accomplished for the individual in that way. Because I minister to the poor and needy as my special work, I am under no less obligation to the heathen; and if I have consecrated myself as a foreign missionary, I have not thereby released myself from my duties to my pastor, if I have one. It is just as necessary for me to support him in every way I can as If I am an active member of the society, I am under the same obligation to be loyal to my own church as I was before I signed the pledge. No, because a person is consecrated or pledged to do a certain duty, his obligation to perform all other duties is not thereby terminated or lessened.

The members may not only consecrate

themselves individually, in some such manner as indicated, but they may, in addition thereto, consecrate themselves to some special work collectively. This tends to bring about concerted action, which is often very necessary to success.

It is apparent that the mid-week prayermeeting is not as well attended and helpful as it might be; that the young people's meeting is lacking in interest; that the Sunday evening service is not as good as it can be made; or that the pastor deserves a more general and hearty support of the members of the church than he is receiving. The leader or president selects some one of these, and, after impressing upon the minds of all the obligation that rests upon each individual to make it a success, asks all who will consecrate themselves to assist in making it a success to indicate such consecration by rising. Do not call for this general consecration at every meeting, but concentrate the whole effort in the performance of the one thing selected, and make it a success before the attention and effort are diverted to anything else.

More specific directions for each consecration meeting will be found in the next succeeding chapter, but remember, as Rev. F. E. Clark has well said, that "the method of the meeting is of comparatively little importance. The principle of the meeting is of great importance—a definite and specific season for the review of the past, and for recommitment to Christ for the future."

CHAPTER XIII.

SUGGESTIVE ORDERS OF EXERCISES.

(For The Consecration Meeting).

ORDER OF EXERCISES, No. 1.

1. Singing of appropriate hymns. All standing.

2. Prayer by the president or pastor.

3. Reading of suitable Scripture lesson by the leader. Psa. 119:1-12; Luke 9:57-62; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Phil. 3:7-16; 1 Tim. 4:1-8; Heb. 6:1-9 are all appropriate.

4. Prayer by the chairman of the Prayer-

meeting Committee.

- 5. Consecration hymn, "I am thine, O Lord."
- 6. Short talk on the meeting and method of consecration, by the leader.
- 7. Roll-call by the secretary. One name at a time. Responses from the members, interspersed with apt remarks by the leader, and an occasional verse of song. Play neither prelude nor interlude, and it is preferable not to use the organ at all if the hymns can be sung well without it.
 - 8. Announcements. (142)

- 9. Song, "The Endeavor Band." (Gospel Hymns No. 6).
 - 10. Mizpah benediction, Gen. 31:49.

ORDER OF EXERCISES, No. 2.

- 1. An organ voluntary, if well rendered, not too long, and the music appropriate. It ought to be of a devotional character, and suited to the evening hour, if the meeting is held at that time, as is usually the case. There could be no better voluntary than one composed of the familiar old tunes to the equally familiar and precious old hymns, ''Sun of my soul, thou Savior dear,'' ''Nearer, my God, to thee,'' ''Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,'' ''More love to thee, O Christ,'' ''Sweet hour of prayer,'' ''Fading, still fading, the last beam is shining.''
- 2. Reception of new members. As each name is read by the secretary the member rises and remains standing. The president or pastor, with a few well-chosen words, welcomes them into the society. All present then rise.
- 3. Active membership pledge repeated in concert.
- 4. Prayer by the chairman of the Lookout Committee.
 - 5. Song, "Take my life and let it be."
- 6. Roll-call. Three names at a time. Occasionally sing a verse or two of some appropriate hymn during the calling of the roll. Also

have persons who can do it well to offer prayer when it seems to be especially in order.

- 7. Repeat the twenty-third Psalm in concert.
- 8. Announcements by the president.
- 9. Song, "Blest be the tie."
- 10. Benediction by the pastor.

ORDER OF EXERCISES, No. 3.

- 1. Remarks by the leader on the necessity of being fully consecrated to the service of God.
- 2. Silent prayer for deeper consecration, followed by the chairman of the Prayer-meeting and Lookout Committees and the president of the society, each leading in a short prayer.
- 3. Song, "For Christ and the Church." (Gospel Hymns, No. 6).
 - 4. Responsive reading. Psa. 51:1-17.
- 5. Song, "Blessed be the fountain of blood." (Gospel Hymns, No. 5). Sung as a solo and chorus.
 - 6. Meeting open for all to take part.
- 7. Roll-call. All who are present and have already fulfilled their pledge by taking part, simply answer "present" when their names are called. Those who have not taken part can do so when the secretary reads their names, and the absent ones can have their quotations read, if they have arranged to have it done.
- 8. All pledge themselves by rising, at the request of the leader, that they will assist in

every possible way to make the mid-week prayermeeting more interesting and profitable.

- Song, "God be with you till we meet again.'
- 10. Announcements and benediction by the leader.

Order of Exercises, No. 4.

- 1. Sing two or three verses each of three or four bright, cheery, familiar hymns. Moody once said, "Of the hour set apart for the prayermeeting, I would have half the time spent in singing." Rev. F. E. Clark, when in Australia, while making his tour of the world, had three hymns sung at the beginning of a prayermeeting he was leading before he got the right "key" for the meeting, and would have called for a fourth if he had not been successful with the third.
- 2. Read, in concert, Matt. 6:1-9, and, bowing the head, repeat the Lord's Prayer.
- 3. Song, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine." (Gospel Hymns, No. 6).
- 4. Roll-call by the leader. All active members present whose name begins with "A" will please rise and renew their pledge by taking part in this consecration service. The person who is nearest the front will respond first each time, and then the next nearest will take part.

When all whose name begins with "A" have responded, call for those whose initial letter 10

is "B," and so on to the end of the alphabet. Let a verse or two of song be interspersed whenever it will add to the interest of the meeting.

- 5. Have the secretary call the roll as in No. 3.
- 6. Ask all who will consecrate themselves as missionaries—all who are "willing to be made willing" to "go or send" the gospel to others—to indicate their consecration by rising.
- 7. Prayer by the pastor that the "spirit of missions, which is the spirit of Christ," may be the controlling principle in all hearts.
- 8. Sing "Speed away," (Gospel Hymns, No. 6), as a duet.
- 9. All read in concert Miss Havergal's consecration hymn, "Take my life and let it be."
- 19. Announcements briefly made and meeting closed by the leader repeating, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The audience responds by saying, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be like minded."

To this the leader replies, "And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

All repeat in concert, "Nevertheless, whereto

we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Phil. 3:13-16.

ORDER OF EXERCISES, No. 5.

- 1. Responsive reading of the twelfth chapter of Romans by the leader, members of the various committees as called upon, and the entire audience. The leader should read the first verse, then ask the Lookout Committee to read the second, everybody present the third, and the Prayer-meeting Committee the fourth, and so on to the end of the chapter. The members of the various committees should sit together.
- 2. Song, "Oh, happy day that fixed my choice."
 - 3. Prayer by the leader.
 - 4. Song, solo or duet and chorus.
- 5. Roll-call by the leader, who asks all the members of the Prayer-meeting Committee to rise and take part, then the Lookout Committee, the Music Committee, the Social Committee, and so on till all the committees have responded, which they should endeavor to do in such a way as to indicate the special work of each committee.

Have appropriate congregational singing interspersed, also arrange for an occasional solo or duet.

6, Have the secretary call the roll as in No. 3.

- 7. Song, of a devotional character.
- 8. Invitation by the pastor to the associate members and others to confess Christ as their Savior.
- 9. Invitation hymn, "Why not now?" (Gospel Hymns, No. 6).
- 10, Announcements and benediction by the president.

ORDER OF EXERCISES, No. 6.

- 1. The chairman or a member of the Music Committee might give a brief sketch of the author of some familiar consecration hymn, dwelling especially upon the origin of the hymn, then let it be sung.
 - 2. Prayer by the president.
- 3. Announcement of the subject by the leader and reading of the Scripture texts selected by the International Committee, followed by the repetition of appropriate texts by the chairman of the various committees.
 - 4. Singing of a consecration hymn.
- 5. Have the names of all the active members in the society printed and a copy placed in the hands of every person present. Ask the person whose name first appears on the list to take part, to be followed by the next and so on to the end of the list. To avoid blunders, one person should quickly follow another. If anyone is absent, there need be but a short pause. A

mimeograph or hectograph may be used to do the printing.

- 6. Let the chairman of the Lookout Committee call the names of those who did not respond. Quite likely they are unavoidably absent, but have sent a quotation to be read by another.
 - 7. Song, suited to the purpose of the meeting.
- 8. Let all bow their heads, while as many as possible offer sentence prayers of self-consecration.
 - 9. Closing remarks by the pastor.
- 10. Announcements, song, benediction by the leader, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his counte nance upon thee, and give thee peace." Num. 6:24-26.

CHAPTER XIV.

SELECTIONS FOR THE CONSECRATION MEETING.

THERE is no more appropriate way of taking part in a consecration meeting than by the recitation of a verse of Scripture, or a stanza or two of some suitable hymn, provided the quotation voices the sentiment and desire of one's own heart. The selection must be made thoughtfully and truthfully with this end in view.

The selection, expressing the aspiration, purpose, desire, or determination of another, should be prefaced or supplemented, by the reader, with a few words indicating this to be his wish also.

The following selections of texts of Scripture and stanzas of consecration hymns, supplementing each other and expressing practically the same thought, it is hoped will be suggestive and helpful.

They should in no case be substituted for thoughtful, prayerful, studious preparation. They are not meant to take the place of anything that a person can and should do for himself, but to be stimulating and suggestive:

1 CHRON. 29: 5.

All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed powers:
All my thoughts, and words, and doings,
All my days, and all my hours.

Let my hands perform his bidding, Let my feet run in his ways, Let my eyes see Jesus only, Let my lips speak forth his praise.

-Mary D. James.

MATT. 20: 27, 28.

My life, my love I give to thee, Thou Lamb of God, who died for me; Oh, may I ever faithful be, My Savior and my God.

Oh, thou who died on Calvary, To save my soul and make me free, I consecrate my life to thee, My Savior and my God.

1 JOHN 1: 7.

To Jesus I give up my all,
Every treasure and idol I know;
For his fullness of blessing I call,
Till his blood washes whiter than snow.

-Wm. McDonald.

HEB. 9: 12.

Lord, I am thine, entirely thine, Purchased and saved by blood divine. With full consent thine I would be, And own thy sovereign right in me.

Here, at the cross where flowed the blood That bought my guilty soul for God, Thee, my new Master, now I call, And consecrate to thee my all.

-Samuel Davies.

1 Cor. 6: 19, 20.

My body, soul, and spirit, Jesus, I give to thee, A consecrated offering, Thine evermore to be.

I'm thine, O blessed Jesus, Washed by thy precious blood, Now seal me by thy Spirit, A sacrifice to God.

-Mary D. James.

ACTS 4: 32.

Naught that I have my own I call; To Christ I do devote my all— Lord, if a sacrifice it be, I make it willingly for thee.

(Adapted) F. E. Snow.

ROMANS 12: 1.

O God, my Father in the sky!
Thou who dost hear me when I cry!
Oh, make "these hands, these lips, these eyes,
This heart," a llving sacrifice!
As once again, on bended knee,
I consecrate myself to thee.

-M. Alice Metcalf.

ROMANS 14: 7-9.

Thine forever! God of love, Hear me from thy throne above; Thine forever may I be, Here and to eternity.

-Mary F. Maude.

MARK 1: 19, 20.

Lord, I obey thy call,
My youth, my strength, my hope,
My talents, aspirations—all
Are thine and thine alone.

-Joel S. Ives.

2 TIM. 4: 6-8.

Be this the purpose of my soul,
My solemn, my determined choice,
To yield to his supreme control,
And in his kind commands rejoice.

Now I resolve with all my heart,
With all my powers to serve the Lord,
Nor from his precepts e'er depart
Whose service gives such rich reward.

-Miss A. Steele.

ECCL. 12: 1.

Lord, I would gladly give
Youth's morning bright;
Love's true endeavor spend
Speeding the right;
Offering my youth to-day,
Take it, O! God, I pray,
Guide me in thine own way—
In truth and light.

-Wm. Bryant.

PSALM 40: 3.

I've learned to sing a glad new song
Of praise unto our King!
And now with all my ransomed powers
His praises I will sing.

—J. B. Hutchinson.

PSALM 104: 33.

I will praise the Lord my Glory, I will praise the Lord my Light, He my cloud by day to cover, He my fire to guide by night.

I will love him, I will trust him, All the remnant of my days, And will sing through endless ages, Only my Redeemer's praise.

-El. Nathan.

1 PETER 1: 18, 19.

I belong to Jesus; He has died for me; I am his and he is mine Through eternity.

I belong to Jesus; I am not my own; All I have and all I am, Shall be his alone.

-M. Fraser.

ROMANS 6: 12, 13.

Lord, I give my all to thee,
Friends, and time, and earthly store;
Soul and body thine to be,—
Wholly thine for evermore.

-Wm. McDonald.

LAM. 3: 27.

In this the morning of my day, To Christ I give myself away, Without reserve, without delay: O Lord, to thee I come.

-R. A. D.

PSALM 89: 1.

I will sing of my Redeemer. And his wondrous love to me: On the cross he sealed my pardon, Gave his life to make me free.

Yes, I'll sing of my Redeemer, And his heavenly love for me: He from death to life hath brought me, Son of God, with him to be.

P. P. Bliss.

LUKE 24: 27, 32.

More about Jesus would I know. More of his grace to others show; More of his saving fullness see, More of his love who died for me.

More about Jesus let me learn, More of his holy will discern; Spirit of God, my teacher be, Showing the things of Christ to me. More about Jesus, in his Word, Holding communion with my Lord; Hearing his voice in ev'ry line, Making each faithful saying mine.

—E. E. Hewitt.

Rev. 5: 9, 10.

I will sing the wondrous story, Of the Christ who died for me, How he left his home in glory, For the cross on Calvary.

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story, Of the Christ who died for me; Sing it with the saints in glory, Gathered by the crystal sea.

-F. H. Rawley.

MATT. 26: 42.

Lord Jesus, as thou wilt;
Oh, may thy will be mine;
Into thy hand of love
I now my all resign:
Through sorrow or through joy,
Conduct me as thine own,
And help me still to say,
My Lord, thy will be done.

—Jane Borthwick.

PHILIPPIANS 3: 7.
My Jesus, I love thee,
I know thou art mine,

For thee all the follies
Of sin I resign;
I will love thee in life,
I will love thee in death,
And praise thee as long
As thou lendest me breath.

-London Hymn Book, 1864.

MATT. 10: 37.

Jesus, I love thee, yes, thou art mine, Living or dying, still I am thine; Jesus, I love thee, thou art to me Dearer than mortal ever can be.

-Ella Dale.

LUKE 14: 33.

Though late, I all forsake;
My friends, my all resign:
Gracious Redeemer! take, O take,
And seal me ever thine!

-Charles Wesley.

PSALM 51: 7.

Lord Jesus, look down from thy throne in the skies,

And help me to make a complete sacrifice; I give up myself, and whatever I know; Now, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

-James Nicholson.

MATT. 20: 4.

I will toil in the field where he calleth me to go,
Though humble the work may be;
I will ask no more: I only care to know
'Tis the way my Lord leadeth me.

-W. O. Cushing.

MARK 14: 7.

I'll clothe the naked, lead the blind, Give to the weary rest; For sorrow's children comfort find, And help for all distressed.

-W. Cutter.

MATT. 7: 13, 14.

Let thoughtless thousands choose the road That leads the soul away from God; This happiness, blest Lord, be mine, To live and die entirely thine.

-H. F. Lyte.

MATT. 5: 45.

Since from thy bounty I receive Such proofs of love divine, Had I a thousand hearts to give, Lord, they should all be thine.

—S. Stennett.

JOHN 3: 16, 17.

Just as I am, thy love, unknown, Has broken every barrier down; Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,

O, Lamb of God, I come, I come.

-Charlotte Elliott.

MATT. 5: 8.

Purer in heart, O God,
Help me to be;
May I devote my life
Wholly to thee.
Watch thou my wayward feet,
Guide me with counsel sweet;
Purer in heart
Help me to be.

Purer in heart, O God,
Help me to be;
That I thy holy face
One day may see;
Keep me from secret sin,
Reign thou my soul within;
Purer in heart
Help me to be.

-Mrs. A. L. Davison.

ACTS 20: 24.

My life I bring to thee, I would not be my own; O Savior, let me be Thine ever, thine alone: My heart, my life, my all I bring, To thee, my Savior and my King. -Miss F. R. Havergal.

JOHN 13 · 1.

Savior, thy dving love Thou gavest me; Nor should I ought withhold. Dear Lord, from thee.

-S. D. Phelps

MATT. 10: 29: 30.

How happy all thy servants are! How great thy grace to me! My life, which thou hast made thy care, Lord, I devote to thee.

-Samuel Wesley.

1 THESS. 5: 22, 23.

Thine, most gracious Lord, O make me wholly thine-Thine in thought, in word, in deed, For thou, O Christ, art mine.

-Mrs. Annie S. Hawks.

ACTS 26: 28.

Fully persuaded, Jesus is mine: Fully persuaded, Lord, I am thine! 11

O make my love to thee Like thine own love to me, So rich, so full and free; Savior divine.

-J. B. Atchinson.

MARK 10: 38.

Oh, the bitter pain and sorrow
That a time could ever be,
When I proudly said to Jesus,
'All of self, and none of thee.''

Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, thy love at last has conquered—
''None of self, and all of thee.''
Theo. Monod.

MARK 14: 3.

Set wholly apart for the use of the Master;
To work, or to rest, or to speak for his sake,
To give to him, like Mary, my choice alabaster,
My sweetest and best o'er his pierced feet to
break.

—Frances Beamish.

1 Samuel 15: 22.

I will go where you want me to go, Lord,Over mountain, or desert, or sea;I will say what you want me to say, Lord,I will be what you want me to be.

1 COR. 6: 19, 20.

"Not my own!" my time, my talent,
Freely all to Christ I bring,
To be used in joyful service
For the glory of our King.

-El. Nathan.

GALATIANS 2: 20.

Thine, Jesus, thine,
No more this heart of mine
Shall seek its joy apart from thee;
The world is crucified to me,
And I am thine.

Thine, thine alone,
My joy, my hope, my crown;
Now earthly things may fade and die,
They charm my soul no more, for I
Am thine alone.

-English.

GALATIANS 6: 14.

Precious Savior, may I live,
Only for thee!
Spend the powers thou dost give
Only for thee!
Be my smiles and be my tears,
Be my young and riper years,
Be my peace and be my strife,
Be my love and be my life

Only for thee!

-Eliza Ann Walker.

PHILIPPIANS 4: 7-9.

Prince of peace, control my will; Bid this struggling heart be still; Bid my fears and doubtings cease, Hush my spirit into peace.

Thou hast bought me with thy blood, Opened wide the gate to God: Peace I ask—but peace must be, Lord, in being one with thee.

-Mary A. S. Barber.

PSALM 51: 10.

Take my soul and body's powers;
Take my memory, mind and will;
All my goods, and all my hours;
All I know, and all I feel;
All I think, or speak, or do;
Take my heart, but make it new.
—Charles Wesley.

Colossians 3: 11.

Before the cross of Him who died, Behold, I prostrate fall; Let every sin be crucified, And Christ be all in all.

-Matthew Bridges.

CHAPTER XV.

PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL MEETINGS.

A CATECHETICAL MEETING.

(Subject-"Soul-Winning.")

- 1. Song, "Rescue the perishing."
- 2. Prayer by the pastor for more soul-winners.
 - 3. Song, "Who is on the Lord's side?"
- 4. Responsive reading of Bible questions and answers, one person reading the question and another the answer. To do this, both references should be duplicated and numbered, or else the texts should be written or printed in full and numbered thus:

QUESTIONS. ANSWERS.

No. 1. Mark 8:36. No. 1. Psa. 49:6, 7.

" 2. Mark 8:37. " 2. 1 Pet. 1:19, 20.

" 3. Psa. 88:14. " 3. Isa. 59:2.

"4. Rom. 7:24. "4. Acts 4:10-12.

" 5. Acts 16:30. " 5. Acts 16:31-34.

" 6. Rev. 7:13. " 6. Rev. 7:14-17.

" 7 Luke 13:23. " 7. Rev. 7:9.

" 8. Matt. 19:25. " 8. Rev. 22:17.

All repeat in concert Rev. 22:14.

5. Song, "Whosoever heareth." (165)

- 6. What is it to be a soul-winner? Give a short, concise definition.
- 7. Will you give three reasons why every Christian ought to be a winner of souls? The will of God; your own salvation, Ezek. 33:8, 9; the church supplied with workers, pastors, teachers, missionaries, Matt. 9:36-38; the example and command of Christ; the value of the soul, are some of the reasons that may be given. Occupy not more than two minutes.
- 8. Song, "Oh, what are you going to do, brother?"
- 9. Short prayer for willingness to toil in any field.
- 10. What are some of the things that cause failure in an attempt to win souls? Lack of faith, tact, perseverence or courage; insufficient preparation; not enough love, "Love never faileth;" not really consecrated to God and the work, are among the causes of failure. Speak briefly of two or three of these, from experience, or observation, or both.
- 11. Prayer—brief, earnest, fervent, believing —for wisdom to win souls. See Prov. 11:30; James 1:5-7, 5:16-18.
- 12. Song, "Weary gleaner, whence comest thou?" To be sung as an antiphonal solo, the congregation joining in the chorus. Let three persons respond in turn.
- 13. Will you tell of some of the earthly rewards of soul-winning? The good that comes

to the community; to the family of the individual; to the person himself who has been turned from sin; to the person who turned him, may be mentioned as some of these rewards. See James 5:20.

- 14. Song, solo and chorus, "Where is my wandering boy?"
- 15. Prayer for prodigal sons and daughters, and their anxious fathers and mothers.
- 16. Luke 15:11-32 read by different persons in the audience, each reading a verse as they shall be called upon by the leader.
- 17. What does the Bible, experience and observation teach us follows soul-winning? Joy to the soul saved; to the individual who has been the instrument of God in his salvation; rejoicing among the good on earth and the saints and angels in heaven. Develop these and similar facts in a two-minute talk. See Luke 15:7, 10, 32; 2 Cor. 7:4; Phil. 2:17, 18; 1 Pet. 1:8.
- 18. Invitation hymn, "Why do you wait, dear brother?"

It will be observed that the songs, Scripture reading and requests for remarks are nearly all in the interrogative form, hence the name, "Catechetical," given to the meeting. A considerable amount of tact is necessary on the part of the leader to prevent the meeting

being formal, but if suitable preparation has been made by all who are to participate, and the leader will use tact in conducting the meeting, the results, I am sure, will be in every way satisfactory. I have selected the topic, "Soulwinning," on account of its importance. Any other subject may be treated in a similar manner. Everything, even to the minutest detail, should be arranged before the meeting. When you get through with the program as you have outlined it, stop. If the time expires before you have carried out the entire order of exercises, stop. The songs indicated in this program may all be found in "Gospel Hymns, Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4."

MISSIONARY MEETING, No. 1.

^{1.} Song, "From Greenland's icy mountains."

^{2.} The 67th Psalm repeated in concert, the request having been made at the meeting the previous Sunday that all memorize it during the week.

^{3.} Prayer by the chairman of the Missionary Committee for foreign missions.

- 4. Song, "Over the ocean wave, far, far away."
- 5. Recitation of missionary texts. Let the request be made in time for all to be prepared. Matt 28:19, 20; Acts 8:4; Psa. 2:8; Isa. 54:2, 3; Acts 16:9, 10; Psa. 72:8; Acts 18:8; Mal. 1:11; Acts 2:41; Psa. 22:27; Dan. 7:14; Acts 11:19-21; Isa. 2:4, and many others. They should be repeated in quick succession.
- 6. Prayer by the leader for the growth of the missionary spirit.
 - 7. Quartette, "Sowing in the morning."
- 8. Original two-minute paper on "The Biography of a Heathen Woman,"—"unwelcome at birth; untaught in childhood; unloved in womanhood; uncherished in widowhood; unprotected in old age; unlamented when dead."
- 9. Recitation, Miss Frances R. Havergal's poem entitled, "Sisters," in *Missionary Tidings*, Indianapolis, for May, 1891.
- 10. Prayer for more helpers, by some member who is actively engaged in doing missionary work.
- 11. "Our work in India." Three two-minute papers by as many persons on subdivisions of the topic. One on "The Field," in which the people; our mission stations, how many, where located; when established; opposition to the work; converts; present needs; outlook for the future, may be considered. A second paper on "Our Missionaries"—how

many have we? who are they? where were they educated? why did they go to the foreign field? how are they supported? And a third paper on "Helping the Missionaries in their Work"--their need of help; our obligation to assist; the various ways in which help may be given, by our prayers, letters of encouragement, money; their work and ours inseparable.

- 12. Song, "Tell it out among the nations,"
- 13. Collection for Indian missions.
- 14. Doxology and benediction.

MISSIONARY MEETING, No. 2.

- 1. Song, "We gather again in the name of our Lord. '
- 2. Responsive recitation of Miss Havergal's consecration hymn, "Take my life," and appropriate texts of Scripture. After each couplet of the hymn has been repeated, have some person respond with an apt Scripture quotation. As there are ten couplets, it should be arranged to have twenty persons take part. The following references may be suggestive: Acts 20:24; Psa. 63:4; Rom. 10:15; Psa. 104:33; Psa. 145:1, 2; Acts 21:13, 14; John 5:30; Psa. 138:1; Psa. 18:1, 2; Rom. 12:1, 2.
- 3. Prayer by some member of the society who is a thorough missionary.
- 4. Reading of Isa. 54:2-5 by the leader, which he follows with a short talk.
 - 5. Song, "The morning light is breaking."

- 6. Short paper on "The Relation of the Christian Endeavor Society to Missions."
 - 7. Song, "Great Jehovah, mighty Lord."
- 8. Paper, "What our Society is Doing for Home and Foreign Missions."
 - 9. Song, "Work for the night is coming."
- 10. Reading of a letter from some missionary the society is assisting to support.
- 11. Prayer with special reference to this missionary and her work.
- 12. "What more can we do for missions?" Ask five or six persons to thoughtfully consider the question and be prepared to give short, definite answers.
- 13. Select the one thing suggested that seems to be the most important and practical, and, after briefly emphasizing these two points, ask all who will pledge themselves to its support to do so by rising. Request the pastor to invoke the blessing of God upon the object chosen, as well as upon the members who have assumed the responsibility of this additional work, "for Christ and the Church."
- 14. Solo and chorus, "Throw out the Lifeline."
 - 15. Benediction by the president.
- All hymns selected from "Gospel Hymns, No. 6, Endeavor Edition."

AN EVENING WITH HYMN-WRITERS AND THEIR HYMNS.

(Consult Duffield's "English Hymns," biographical encyclopedia, musical dictionaries, hymn books, papers and magazines).

- 1. A three-minute talk by the pastor on "Mary, the Mother of Jesus"—her lineage, name, home, traditional appearance, song etc., dwelling particularly upon the annunciation as the occasion of the composition of her song, and the peculiarities of her "hymn of praise."
- 2. Scripture reading in concert—Mary's Song—''The Magnificat.'' Luke 1:46-55.
- 3. Prayer by the chairman of the Music Committee.
- 4. ''Isaac Watts and his hymns.'' Occupy not more than three minutes in bringing out the principal features.
- 5. Song, "Joy to the world," tune, "Antioch."
- 6. A short biographical account of Handel, the composer of "Antioch."
- 7. "The Esthonian Legend of the Origin of Song." See "English Hymns," page 307.
- 8. The tune "Old Hundred," and Wilhelm Franc its composer.
- 9. Biographical sketch of Bishop Thomas Ken, author of the doxology, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."
- 10. Hymn, "Praise God." Tune, "Old Hundred."

- 11. Relate briefly one or two incidents connected with the use of this hymn. See "English Hymns," page 456.
- 12. Give a short history of Miss Phoebe Cary.
- 13. Hymn, "One sweetly solemn thought." To be sung as a solo.
- 14. Repeat the authentic story of the gamblers in China, illustrating the power of song in general, and of this one in particular, over the soul. See "English Hymns," page 448.
- 15. Give a three-minute talk about "Charles Wesley, the hymn-writer."
- 16. Hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul." Tune, "Martyn."
- 17. Tell of this hymn being a universal favorite, and give two or three reasons why you think it is so.
- 18. Read what Henry Ward Beecher once said concerning it. "English Hymns," page 287.
- 19. Arrange for two or three persons to each relate an incident in which this hymn had a conspicious place.
- 20. Read a two-minute paper on "Mendels-shon, the musical composer.
- 21. Hymn, "Hark, the herald angels sing."
 Tune, Mendelsshon's "Herald Angels."
- 22. A brief history of "Edward Perronet and the hymn that made him famous—"All hail the power of Jesus" name."

The Young People's Prayer-Meeting.

23. "Coronation" and Oliver Holden-the Tune and its Composer. Give a short account of both. See "English Hymns," page 19.

24. Hymn, "All hail the power of Jesus" name." Tune, "Coronation."

25. Benediction.

THE USE OF THE BLACKBOARD

IN THE

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRAYER-MEETING.

It has often occurred to me that one of the most valuable aids to the young people's prayer-meeting is being sadly neglected. I refer to the blackboard. I see very little in our papers concerning its use, and I believe its proffered assistance is being refused by the mighty host of young people who meet every week in the capacity of a prayer-meeting. If this is so, then one of the principal avenues to the heart is not being utilized for the gospel message. There are songs, Scripture readings, prayers, illustrations, remarks, quotations, etc., ad infinitum, appealing to the heart through the ear, to the partial or entire neglect of that no less important avenue, the eve.

Object-teaching has long been considered the most effectual means of child

training, and we ought to realize that it is one of the best methods of instructing the adult—"the child grown older."

This was the method adopted by the Savior, and he never made any mistakes. Read the Gospels and see the beauty and learn the power of object-teaching.

The blackboard, if used intelligently, can be made very helpful. Like every thing else that tends to make the meetings more interesting and profitable, it must have time and thought applied to it. Even a blackboard can get into a "rut."

Let me suggest a few of the ways in which a blackboard can be put to good use in the prayer-meeting.

Do not always use it in the same way. That is the bane of nearly all religious service to-day. The blackboard is used more extensively in the Sunday-schools than in any other department of church work, and almost invariably in a stereotyped manner. There are other "chestnuts" besides the oft-repeated stories and illustrations, especially when applied to the church, Sunday-school, mid-week

prayer-meeting, and, sometimes, to that fresh, vigorous, promising organization, the Y. P. S. C. E.

Do not allow the blackboard to come in for its share of censure, by making a "wall-flower" of it, or at least the same kind of wall-flower at every meeting.

Do not use the blackboard to show your ingenuity as a delineator. The prayermeeting is not the place to display fashion plates and show-bills. I have sometimes seen what appeared to me something very much like this attempted in the Sundayschool, and in the "custom made" blackboard illustrations in certain Sundayschool journals, where more ingenuity than sanctified common sense was used.

Illustrate the subject of the meeting if it can be aptly done, otherwise do not attempt it. Some topics can be well illustrated by some persons. This is a very important statement, and should always be remembered. An illustration fails to illustrate if it does not carry with it its own explanation and application of the fact illustrated.

The idea I would convey is that the illustration to be apt and appropriate must not be similar to the two pictures the little boy drew on his new slate. One was the picture of a cow, the other that of a sheep, but they were so nearly alike that he had to distinguish them by writing, "This is a cow. The other is a sheep."

Apt pictorial illustrations, like words fitly spoken, are like apples of gold in pictures of silver, and if you have some one in your society endowed with the peculiar talent to make them, give him

an opportunity to do so.

If the subject can not be suitably illustrated, then let some other appropriate theme be thus brought to the attention of those present. "Lost Opportunities" may be written at the top of the blackboard and illustrated in scores of ways. The same may be said of "The Value of Little Things," "Intemperance," "Sowing and Reaping," "The Power of Habit," and many other subjects of equal importance, all of which should be im-

pressed upon heart and mind again and again in every conceivable way.

Write or print the subject of the meeting and the central thought, together with the Scripture texts to be read for the opening lesson. A few hymns, to be sung at the beginning of the meeting, may be selected and the numbers indicated on the blackboard. An appropriate stanza or two of some hymn may also be added—written in full.

At another time a suitable text of Scripture may be written on the board, followed by one or two lessons that should be learned from it. Or the text may be supplemented by a sentence or two of appeal, or an exclamatory sentence indicating surprise, or an interrogatory sentence. Matt. 11: 28 may be followed by lessons or sentences as indicated, as may hundreds of other texts. But try this one and see how easily it can be done.

Write on the blackboard what Charles Darwin said about foreign missionary work; William E. Gladstone's statement concerning modern preaching; Napoleon

Bonaparte's tribute to Christ; Queen Victoria's message to the Queen of Madagascar; Robert Ingersoll's despairing wail at the funeral of his brother; James A. Garfield's creed, or the "weighty words" of some other noted person.

Subdivide the topic and write the topic and subdivisions on the blackboard, having previously arranged with as many persons as there are subdivisions to consider them briefly in the order in which they are written.

At the close, write the best sentence on the board that has been spoken by any one during the meeting. It is well to have a reversible board so that this sentence may be placed by itself on the opposite side.

The leader need not always be the judge of the best sentence. Sometimes the chairman of one of the committees or the president or some one else may act in this capacity, and should briefly tell what he thinks the best sentence spoken, and why.

Of course his opinion may differ from

the opinions of others, but it should not lead to the expression of those opinions, especially in the spirit of criticism and fault-finding.

Whatever is placed upon the blackboard should be done before the meeting begins, with the exception just mentioned.

Studiously avoid all acrostics, monograms and "flourishes" done for "effect," for they do not produce the effect that should be desired. Use the blackboard conscientiously; use it prayerfully; use it eclectically; use it regularly; and you will surely use it profitably.













